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Mr. CLAUDE's  
**ANSWER**  
TO  
Monsieur de M. E A U X's Book,  
INTITULED,  
**A Conference With Mr. CLAUDE.**  
WITH HIS  
**LETTER to a FRIEND.**  
WHEREIN  
He Answers a Discourse of M. *de Condom*, now  
Bishop of *Meaux*, concerning the Church.

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IMPRIMATUR,  
Junii 18. 1687.

GUIL. NEEDHAM.

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# THE Author's Preface.

**A**MONG all the Points in Controversy betwixt us, and the Gentlemen of the *Romish* Communion, it is plain there is not any one wherein they think better of their Cause than this, which hath been started since our Reformation, Concerning the Church; and yet, perhaps there is not any one wherein they have less reason to think so. Were this groundless confidence observed to be predominant among the Vulgar only, who seldom look beyond the prejudices of their Infancy; or among the busy men of intrigue in the Age, who are ever railing their worldly Advantages, as a Bulwark against the Truth; there would be no great reason to be surprised at it. But the most amazing thing of all is, that we continually meet with the same Opinion in persons that want neither Understanding, nor sound Sense and Judgment; and which otherwise seem men of Integrity and Sincerity; so that there is scarce any question to be made, but that they are verily perswaded of the thing, as a certain undoubted Truth.

Now for the undceiving these Persons, it will, in my opinion, be convenient, not only to set their own Conceptions before them; but also to go back as far as the ground and original of those Conceptions, that so they themselves may please to make such Reflexions upon them, as they shall judg fit and necessary. The ground then of all this mistake is, that upon pretence of the Churches being a Society, they immediately suffer themselves to be possest at first with an Opinion, That we are to judg of it almost in the same manner, that we do of a Civil Society; and so never give themselves the trouble of enquiring into the differences by which these two are distinguisht from one another. Hence they have fancied, that the Essence of the Church consists intirely in something External; and that as a man need do no more to become a true Member of a Civil Society, than only live in an outward observance of the Laws; so to become a true Member of the Church, no more was required, than barely an outward Profession of the Faith and Religion; and that there

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was no necessity at all of any inward Virtues, such as Faith, Hope, and Charity. This is the very thing that hath made the Definitions of most of their modern Divines, who place it in a meer outward Profession, be entertained with Approbation and Applause. And when once these Definitions are received, they are under a necessity of looking upon, not any one part of these Professors, to be the true Church of Jesus Christ; but in general, the whole Body of Professors, whether they be good or bad men, just or unjust, hypocrites or sincere Believers.

From hence, by another unavoidable consequence, they are forced to conceive of the Church, not only as an exterior and visible Body, but as a Body distinctly, and certainly visible, to such a degree I mean, that a man might point out, without any danger of mistake, the particular men of whom it is composed; as plainly and distinctly, as you can point the Persons that make up any other Society; and declare without the least fear of mistaking your men, *such and such are members of it.* Such a visibility of the Church as this it is, that *Bellarmin* hath explained thus: \* *The Church is a company of Men as visible, and as palpable, as the Citizens of Rome, the Kingdom of France, or the Republike of Venice.* So that his meaning is, that as the French, the Romans and Venetians, may plainly and particularly be singled out; so likewise may the Persons that make the Body of the Church be, as particularly, and with the same degree of certainty that they were. Indeed, if there be nothing besides a bare outward Profession required, to make men truly Members of the Church, This Profession is a thing discernable by the eye, in every single person; and thus the Church will be visible, so as that particular men may be plainly distinguished to be of it.

By another necessary and unavoidable Consequence, they were constrained to apply all the Promises made by God to his Church, whether in the Old or New Testament, to this visible and exterior Body. And being these Promises include the Churches perpetuity, that they might keep as close to their first Notions as they could, there was a necessity of explaining the Churches subsistence in this sense: That the Church must always subsist after the manner of a sensible and palpable body, so as to be the object of our sight, and discernable by all the World, even to a plain and positive distinction of particular persons. Hence it is, that they have drawn their so much boasted Succession, and which all their disputes run so much upon. Whereby they understand a continued train of Priests, one after another, in the same Episcopal Sees, and a continued train of people, making up the same Congregations; so as that both People and Priests always make profession of the same Religion, without any change or alteration, except it be perhaps in matters of Discipline, which are things that may very well admit of a change, without making the Church to differ from what it was before.

Then

Ecclesia est  
etiam homi-  
num ita visibi-  
lis, & palpabi-  
lis, ut est ex-  
emplis populi Ro-  
mani, vel Reg-  
num Galliae,  
vel Respubli-  
cae Venerorum.  
*Bellarmin.* de  
Eccles. Lib. 3.  
cap. 2. Edit.  
Augdun. 1587.

Then carrying these Conceptions of theirs still further, they fancied, that as in order to the preservation of the Civil Society, an absolute Supreme Authority, to which all must bend, is necessary, because without such a one there would be no possible means of compeling differences, or preventing Domestick quarrels ; the same was likewise necessary in the Church : That in this, one Supreme and Absolute Tribunal must be acknowledged upon Earth ; that without this and an intire obedience paid to it, even in matters of Conscience, Dispute would never be ended, nor Unity preserved, but at last things would come to such a pass that there would start up as many Churches, and different Religions, as Families. And this gave birth to their pretensions to Infallibility, and a blind impli-  
cite obedience to the determinations of Councils, without presuring to examine them at all.

Lastly, It is by all these prejudicte opinions, that the Gentlemen of the *Romish* Communion suppose themselves able to overthrow the Protestant-Cause, and make that of their own Church impregnable. The pretended Reformed Church, say they, cannot be this exterior body, always visible, and palpable, which must have continued in this state of visibility, and that without any alteration, ever since Jesus Christ, and the Apostles time, down to ours ; because this is not above a hundred or sixscore years old, Therefore it is not the Church of Christ. This cannot shew a continued succession of Priests and People, Assemblies and Episcopal Sees, nor a profelion of one and the same Religion without any variation, which is exactly what Christ promised. Therefore this is not the Church of Jesus Christ. This Church hath forsaken the Supreme Authority and Infallibility of the Church of *Rome*, and refused to pay obedience to her decisions ; on the contrary the hath taken upon her to examine those Decisions, and hath done all that in her lay utterly to subvert this Tribunal, which is so necessary to the subsistence of the true Church : Therefore she is not the Church of Jesus Christ.

Of these Objections especially hath *M. de Meaux* made his Book to consist ; and because this of mine is made publick only with a design to answer that, it is not fit I should prevent the reading of it in this Preface, nor foretel the judgment men may make of my Answers, when they see them at large. I shall think it therefore sufficient to say in general, by way of preparation, That all these pretended Principles which the Gentlemen of the *Romish* Communion take the freedom to suppose, are every one of them false and sophistical, and capable of being contuted more ways than one, because all built upon a false and vain foundation. For in truth what greater vanity can there be, than to go about to form an Idea of the Church, after the pattern of a Civil Society ? The Civil Society is a humane contri-  
vance,

vance, that owes its birth to natural instinct, under the Government of a General Providence, and is kept up and preserved by Rules of Justice and humane Policy. The Church is a Divine and Supernatural work, born only of the Blood of the Son of God, and animated only by his Spirit. His hands have made it, and his particular Providence watches over it, and preserves it. The Laws of the Civil Society do not properly respect any more than the outward man, they never make it any part of their End or business to regulate mens' hearts, or alter the inclinations, or inward motions there; all within, they leave perfectly free, and are satisfied with an outward observation, which comes within the reach of man's power. The Laws of the Church do chiefly regard the inward man, their design is to sanctifie the heart, and fix themselves especially in the soul, which are effects above any power of man, and can belong to none but God only.

The matters in which the Civil Society is employed, are meerly temporal, such as we call the Goods of Fortune, Honour, Trade, the Exercise of Arts and Sciences, and other things of this kind, which may be cognisable by men, and brought under their Jurisdiction. But the matters in which the Society of the Church is concerned, consist in Mysteries conveyed to us by a Supernatural Revelation; in Laws imposed upon the Conscience; in the internal and external practice of Christian Virtues. Now all these things are Heavenly, Spiritual, unchangeable, having no dependance upon the will, authority, or declaration of men, but solely and immediately upon the will of God, and his declaring them to be such. To make a man a true member of the Civil Society, there is no more required than to seem so in the eyes of the world, who can pass a judgment only on the outward appearance, without being able to dive into the heart. To be a member of the Church, it is required that a man be so, not in the eyes of men only, but of God too, who as the Scripture expresses it, *trieh the very hearts and reins*, and will not be satisfied with a pare outside. The design of Civil Societies, is, that every man may according to his quality and station, enjoy the publick Priviledges, that his Personal Rights and Properties may be preserved intire, that each particular person may live quietly and peaceably under the protection of the whole Body; and these are Advantages not out of the power of men to give. The end for which the Church is designed, is everlasting Salvation, a Heavenly Paradise, the happiness of a life to come, which are all Advantages not within the power of men to confer. In the Civil Society, private men ought rather to suffer injuries that are put upon them, than disturb the peace of the whole Body, because such injuries may be endured, and yet not approved; and besides if they do it, the evil is not past

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all redress; for God who protects the innocent and oppressed, is able to right them, and recompence their losses with interest: In the Church it is far otherwise, where the Conscience must acquiesce, and a quiet submition cannot be given to a lye, an error, or an unjust thing, without approving it; and when it is approved, the evil is past redress, for God will avenge that fault, and nothing can make us amends for the loss of our Eternal Salvation: Besides, that the peace we hereby allow the whole Body, is so far from a Blessing, that it is the worst of Evils, being, in truth, no better than a War against God. I repeat it therefore once again, That there is not in the World a greater falsity, nor a more sophistical impoliture, than the framing such a notion of the Church, after the model of Civil Societies.

The case standing thus, who does not perceive that all the conclusions from this false supposition fall to the ground, and utterly vanish? A man must not after this, fancy the Church to be a Body merely external, nor that all its essence consists in a bare Profession; nor that these Definitions given us of it, which run upon an outward profession of the same Faith, a participation of the same Sacraments, a submision to the same Pope, without allowing internal Graces any share, are good and valid definitions; nor that wicked men, worldlings and hypocrites, are Members of Jesus Christ's true Church. All this would do, if the question were concerning a Body, or contrivance merely humane, as the Civil Societys. But when we discourse of a thing that is the work and contrivance of God, and must bear some proportion to the excellency of its Author, we must affirm that Faith, Hope and Charity, and in one word, all the parts of true Regeneration are essential to it; and that this consists of the Faithful and Elect only, excluding thence the Hypocrites and Reprobate. We must not afterwards fancy the Church to be a body or company of men, visible at the same rate that Kingdoms and Commonwealths are; Leman, so as to distinguish plainly, and without danger of mistake, the very persons whereto it is composed. This were allowable, provided the Church consisted in an outward appearance, and bare profession only. But we must affirm it to be visible in the midst of dissemblers, as honest men are visible, when mixt with those that act otherwise; or to make use of a Scripture instance, as the good Corn is visible, tho mingled in the same field with Tares that look like it. The Promises of Jesus Christ must no longer be applied to all the exterior Body made up of a mere profession, nor must the perpetuity of the Church be imagined to mean a continuall of this exterior Body in the same condition, without undergoing any alteration; or a constant equal succession of Priests, People, Sees and Councils. This might be admitted, if all this exterior body were

were the true Church of Jesus Christ, if that were not mixt with worldlings and wicked men, who change the Church as to outward appearances; or if it's Ministry were sure to be always intrusted in the hands of good men. But the case being otherwise, these Promises must be confined to the true Believers, and the Church conceived to subsist for ever in this mixture of wicked persons, and consequently, that it shall subsist sometimes among the publick corruptions of the Ministry, to which Almighty God sets bounds, as his wisdom sees fit for the preservation of his Children. We must not any longer believe a supream, visible, and speaking authority in the Church, to be necessary for putting an end to differences and disputes; nor upon this pretence allow Ecclesiastical Assemblies to be infallible, or forbid the faithful to examine their determinations. This might pass, if the Church were preserved, as Civil Societies are, by rules of humane policy; or if some temporal advantages were the only thing enquired after; or if the matters so determined, required only an outward compliance, as those in Civil Societies do. But now, that the Church is under a protection infinitely more effectual than all the wisdom of Man; now that Salvation is the thing in question, and a submission of Conscience the thing required, it must be confess'd, that since Divine ~~Re~~velation ceased, there is no further need of any other supreme infallible Authority, besides that of the Scripture, which is the Church's Law, its Oracle, and perpetual Rule; a Rule plain and clear in what it expresses in all things necessary to be believed; plain and clear in its silence with relation to other things not necessary to be believed: It must be owned, that since God does not call men to Ministerial functions immediately, and by himself, it may happen that these Functions may generally be exercised by Reprobates; and to suppose that such people as these, who can challenge no share in God's Promises to his Church, are infallible, would be the most palpable absurdity in the World. We must acknowledg, that since it is so uncertain, whether the men that make up these Assemblies, are themselves really of Jesus Christ's Church, it would be not only rash, but wicked, to receive their Decrees implicitly, and submit to them without any Examination at all; because this were really to put our Salvation upon the venture, which ought to be infinitely dearer to us than any thing in the World, and which, if once lost, can never be made amends for again. Lastly, we must not upon these pretended Principles take up Prejudices against the Protestant Churches, nor tax them with Novelty, because they are not united to this visible, exterior Body, which was before the Reformation; or because they do not shew that uniform succession of Sees, and Councils, and the profession of the same Religion, without any alteration at all, and every thing as was practised before; nor pretend

tend they have subverted a Tribunal necessary for the subsistence of the true Church, because they refuse to acknowledg the Church of *Rome's* Authority, and to comply with her determinations. These several charges upon us might be tolerably well laid, if a man could assert that the Church consists of all this exterior body, as it might be asserted, if a Civil Society were the matter in question. But being that body must be distinguished into two parts, the one consisting of good, the other of ill men; the one of good Corn, the other of Tares; the Protestant Church cannot be called new, if it only oppose this latter part, which had gotten possession of all the outward advantages, to wit, the Ministry, the Sees, the Churches, the Councils, the Schools, and in one word, the Exterior Profession, and which had changed and corrupted all these. For is there any necessity that a Church should groan under the same oppression, in order to being the same with a Church that was before? Is there a necessity of lying under the Tares that choak'd and encompassed the Corn, in order to being of the Corn? And are not men the same Children of *Jacob*, without being among the same strangers among whom that Family hath been? The Protestants have not one jot the less really, and truly, a succession of Sees, of Councils, and the profession of Religion, for not having that part of them which was earthly and unclean. I acknowledg they have given quite another aspect and appearance to the House of God, by this cleansing; but still there is the same Ministry, the same Sees, the same Assemblies, the same Profession, not with respect to the corruptions that appeared in them, but in regard of the Chrifitian Order which still continued under all this filth and nastiness. The vessels of the Temple are still the same, only they are washed, made clean, and restored to their natural use. And as for that pretended Tribunal of the *Romifh* Church, which the Reformation has subverted, it never having any more foundation than what was imaginary, and merely humane, there is no reason to complain of the Protestants, for not submitting to it, because they would thereby have done wrong to that of the Scripture, which is Jesus Christ's true Tribunal, fixed, and to continue for ever, in the midst of his people.

But this shewing the many differences between the Church and Civil Societies, is not the only method of confuting these Gentlemen's Principles. Take which way you will, their falsity and weakness is easily discovered, and they are likewise attended with this inconvenience, that as soon as one of them is overthrown, all the rest fall with it. Overthrow for instance but that one principle, that the true Church must be an exterior visible Body, even to the pointing out of the particular persons whereof it is composed, and at the same time you overthrow all thofe definitions,

finitions they give of it, which include bad men as well as good, and make reprobates to be no less members than the Elect; you overthrow their application of God's Promises to this whole Body; you overthrow its perpetuity in this Condition, by virtue of those Promises; you overthrow the necessity of this pretended external Succession, upon which they lay such mighty stress; you evacuate the supreme Authority, and Infallibility of Church Assemblies, and the blind obedience required to their determinations. The case is the same with all their other principles particularly, which must of necessity, either all stand, or all fall together.

I might truly say, that you can no where observe a Systeme more effectually destroyed in the several parts of it, than this is in the Book now published by me: For there is not any one of the propositions that help to make that Systeme, but I have confuted it substantially, by Arguments that amount even to a Demonstration. Which way can any one maintain that Definition of the Church which goes upon a bare outward profession, and makes it consist of bad as well as good men; and which *Stapleton, Bellarmin, Cardinal du Perron*, and some other Controversial Divines look upon as a principal point, after having observed what I have written on this subject, in the second question of the Letter to my Friend, and the Examination of *M. de Meaux*'s ninth Reflection? What pretence can men have for carrying on the Churches visibility so far, as to a plain, particular, and constant designation of mens persons that help to make up that Body, after having considered what is said to this purpose in my Third Question, and in the Examination of *M. de Meaux*'s Eleventh Reflection? How can men fancy that Jesus Christ's Promises belong to this exterior Body composed of good and bad men promiscuously, after what I have written to this purpose upon the fourth Question, and the Examination of the Twelfth Reflection? Which way can the External Succession be defended, in the sense these Gentlemen understand it, after having weighed my *Answer to the Second Part of M. de Condom's Discourse*, and compared it with my Examination of the Eighth and Thirteenth Reflection? What can be said in behalf of the Supreme Authority Church Assemblies pretend to, and the ready Obedience to them, without any trying their decisions, which these Gentlemen would make us believe ought to be paid them, after having compared the Relation of our Conference, with what I have written on the Six first Reflections? I must confess the strength of my Reasons may possibly receive some disadvantage from the manner of my delivering them; and that it required a more skilful hand than mine, which might have spoke with all the elegance, and address of my renowned Adversary. But yet I dare aver, that even in my plain way, and

and in the midst of all my bluntness, there will be found enough to satisfy and convince my Readers, That the Systeme treated of is upon many accounts quite destroyed, both as to the whole, and as to each of its parts.

I am sensible, this Systeme is a thing contrived with abundance of cunning and skill, that it was never the invention of one single Brain; that they have made it look as specious as the thing could possibly bear; But all the skill and cunning in the World can never give a thing so great a lustre as Truth; and it is plain, that That Systeme can never be true, which is repugnant to the evidence both of Scripture and Reason. I may add too, that notwithstanding all the pains taken to contrive it as strong as might be, they are forced to leave it with many weaknesses, which it was impossible for them to conceal. Nay, such a Systeme particularly is This, which contradicts experience, and contradicts it so far too, that were the Church of *Rome* it self, for whose advantage it was first establish'd, to be tryed by these Principles that compose it, she could not make her party good. Let us, if you please, venture an experiment upon that principle which asserts the perpetuity of the same Exterior Body. Will you take the confidence to call that of the three first Ages, the same Body with the modern Church of *Rome*, where there is not the least tittle to be found of direct Invocation of Saints and Angels in the publick service of the Church; where there is not the least addressing to Images and Pictures in their worship; where there is no prohibition of the Cup to the Laity; nor of the use of Scripture in the vulgar Tongue, without leave granted by the Ordinary; nor of Praying in a Language which the people do not understand; where we find nothing to the contrary, but that the Scripture is the only, and the sufficient Rule of Faith, in all things necessary to Salvation; where we meet with no such number of Sacraments as seven, no use made of Papal Indulgences, no necessity of Auricular Confession, no Elevation of the Host that the people may prostrate themselves in adoration to it; no Transubstantiation, nor Real presence made Doctrines; no mention of the Church of *Rome*'s being the Mother and Mistress of all other Churches, nor of I know not how many things besides which are of very considerable importance? Will you call the Church of *Rome*, as it stands at this day, as it looks upon the opinion of the *Millenaries* to be erroneous, as it prohibits giving the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper to little Children, as it believes the beatification of God antecedent to the last Judgment, as it forbids the Clergy to Marry; will you call this, I say, the same Exterior Body with the Primitive Church, which believed and practised directly the contrary? To call this the same Body, is like *Thesens* his Ship, which was always

called the same Ship, tho there was scarce a Plank in it all, that had not been changed.

A Second experiment may be made in that Principle which relates to the Succession in Episcopal Sees, as these Gentlemen are pleased to understand it: For how can they ever maintain this Succession in the See of *Rome*, which they look upon as the very Original and Centre of Church-Unity, while they agree, as they do, that many of those Popes were intruders against all Law and Custom, and consequently false Popes, such as *Baronius* calls \* *Violent seizers of the Apostolick See, unlawful Usurpers of the Papal Name and Chair, False Popes which only served to make the times they lived in notorious*? And now seeing this intrusion continued for almost one whole Age, and the call to all Ecclesiastical Functions depends upon the See of *Rome*, what must we think of those which proceeded from these false Popes, and those that followed after them? How can they make good this Succession in the person of *Vigilius*, who by their own confession was an Usurper of the See over *Sylverius*, and a Schismatick, excommunicated, he and all his party that adhered to him, by *Sylverius* the rightful Pope? Which adherents were not only all the Clergy of *Rome*, but all the Archbishops and Bishops of the Empire, excepting only four Bishops that were banish'd with *Sylverius*, and joyned with him in signing the sentence of Excommunication; *Sylverius* dyed, *Vigilius* kept the Papacy still, and yet the Excommunication was not taken off. It is acknowledged to be a just and valid sentence, and yet from these excommunicated persons are all the Popes, Patriarchs, Primates, Archbishops and Bishops descended ever since.

\* *Baronius*, ad Ann. 900 de Stephano septimo. Stephanus Apostol - cae sedis invasor. --- & paulo post, faci- norosus homo, quiq; ut fur, & la- tro ingres- sus est in ovi- um. --- Ad ann. 908. (de Sergio primo)

Perpetrata sunt ista ab invasoribus, & intrusis in Apostolicam sedem, Pontificis nomen usurpan- tibus, & illegitime thronum Apostolicum invadentibus. --- ad Ann. 912. (de Joanne decimo, qui post Landonem Petri cathedram ascendit, Theodoræ, scorti tunc temporis potentissimi auspiciis) Quæ tunc facies Ecclesia Romanæ? Cum darentur Episcopi, intruderentur in sedem Petri me- tericium amasii Pseudopontifices, qui non sint nisi ad consignanda tantum tempora in Catalogo Romanorum Pontificum scripti. Annal. Tom. 10. Edit. Antwerp.

† *Baronius* in the relation of this Accident, endeavours all he can, to de- prive us of the Conclusions we draw from it. He tells us therefore, that. 440. Se à he guesses *Vigilius* acted a part all that while, and that being informed of Pontifica- tu abdicasse *Vigilius*, ex spatio vacationis sedis *Silverii* dicendum omnino est; nam quomodo potuit, secundum *Anastasium*, sedes vacâsse sex dies, si *Vigilius*, ipso vivente *Silverio*, intrusus semel, sedere post ejus obitum perseverâset? Annal. Tom. 7. Pag. 301. Edit. Antwerp.

*Sylverius* his death, he of his own accord resigned the Popedom usurped by him before, and at the same time got the Clergy of *Rome* to chuse him into it again. This conjecture he grounds upon four words in *Anastasius*, that the See was vacant six days. But this is a very idle story: There is not any Author mentions this voluntary resignation of *Vigilius*, nor his being chosen in again by the Clergy of *Rome*, as is pretended; 'tis all a pure fancy of *Baronius*, without any manner of probability for it; and the five or six days which the See continued vacant, are to be understood to follow, not *Sylverius* his death, but the time of his being deposed by *Belisarius* illegally and by force, who took away his *Palium*, and compelled him to resume a Monks habit. He lived after that a year in exile in the Island of *Palmenia*; there he excommunicated *Vigilius* and his faction, to wit, the Clergy of *Rome*, that very Clergy which chose *Vigilius* to succeed him; so that the Excommunication being just and valid, as *Baronius* owns it was, we cannot look upon *Vigilius* and his Clergy, and all the Bishops in the World then, any otherwise than as men degraded, and cut off from the Church: And then according to *M. de Meaux*'s principles, there was no way left, but for Christ to come into the World once more, to re-establish the call to the Ministry. The truth of what I assert, may be tryed a third way, in that Principle of the supreme Authority, and Infallibility of Councils, and the blind implicit obedience they pretend is due to them. For supposing this Principle to take place, the Church of *Rome* hath ceased to be a true Church long ago. I shall not here produce all those Councils heretofore that decreed in favour of *Arianism*; such as that of *Antioch*, of *Sardica*, or of *Philippi*, that of *Milan*, of *Sirmium*, of *Arimini*, of *Seleucia*, or of *Constantinople*. I will not instance in the second Council of *Ephesus*, where the Bishop of *Rome*'s Legates assisted, which establisht the *Eutychian* Heresy; nor that of *Diospolis*, which acquitted *Pelagius* the Heretick. Nor will I speak of those which have at several times determined things directly contradictory to one another, in the matter of Images, such as the Council of *Constantinople* under *Constantine Capronymus*; the second Council of *Nice*, under the Empress *Irene*, the Council of *Franckfort* under *Charlemagne*, and the Council of *Paris* under *Lewis the Debonaire*. Nor will I insist upon the Councils held in the Tenth Age, which contradicted one another upon this question, whether *Formosus* could be lawfully preferred to the Papacy, contrary to his Oath, which a Pope had dispensed with; and whether all the persons ordained by him ought not to be reordained: Without troubling our selves with things so far off, we need only desire these Gentlemen to tell us, if they really and sincerely believe these few late Councils to be infallible? That of *Rome* under *Gregory the seventh*, where *Baronius* says,

(a) *Baronius ad Ann. 1076.*

*Privilegia Apostolicae sedis,*

& *Romanii Pontificis.*

*Quod Papae iaceat Imperatores deponere.*

*Quod sententia illius à nullo debeat retractari,*

& *ipse omnium solus re-*

*tractare possit.*

*Quod à fidelitate iniquorum Subjectos potest absolvire.*

*Annal. Tom. 11. Pag. 485. Edit. Romæ 1605.*

(b) *Relaxatos autem se neverint à debito fidelitatis, & hominii, ac totius obsequii, dum in tantâ iniquitate permanerint, quicunq; illis aliquo peccato, ( pacto ) tenentur annexi. Conc. Lateran. 3. Cap. 27. Anno 1179. Coilett. Labbe. Lut. Paris. 1671. Tom. 10. Pag. 1523.*

(c) *Si vero Dominus temporalis requisitus, & monitus Ecclesia, terram suam purgare neglexerit ab haereticâ fœditate, per Metropolitanum, & cæteros comprovinciales Episcopos Excommunicationis vinculo innotetur. Et si satisfacere contemperit infra annum, significetur hoc summo Pontifici, ut extunc ipse Vassallos ab ejus fidelitate denunciet abfolutos, & terram exponat Catholicis occupandam, qui eam exterminatis haereticis sine ullâ contradictione possideant. Conc. Lateran. 4. Ann. 1215. Cap. 3. de Haereticis Collect. Labb. Tom. 11. Part. 1. Pag. 148.*

(d) *See Innocent the fourth's sentence against the Emperor Frederick, past in the Council of Lyons. It is at large in Labbe's Collection of Councils, Tom. 11. part. 1. Pag. 640. in the Close are these words. Nos super præmissis-memoratum Principem---omni honore & dignitate privatum à Domino ostendimus, denunciamus, & nihilo minus sententiando privamus. Omnes, qui ei Juramento fidelitatis tenentur adstricti, a Juramento hujusmodi perpetuo absolventes, autoritate Apostolica firmiter inhibendo, ne quisquam de cætero sibi tanquam Imperatori, vel Regi pareat vel intendat. Et decernendo quolibet, qui deinceps ei, velut Imperatori, aut Regi, consilium, vel auxilium præstiterint, seu favorem, ipso facto excommunicationis vinculo subjacere.*

(e) *Universas potestates, & dominos temporales, & Judices antedictos exhortando requirimus, & mandamus eisdem, — ut pro defensione fidei — inquisitoribus Haereticæ pravitatis — parent & intendant, præbeantq; auxilium, & favorem Labb. Collect. Concil. Constant. Bulla. Inter cunctas pastoralis Curæ, &c. Tom. 12. Pag. 259.*

Bishops, but even Kings and other supreme Governors, of what quality soever they be, to the judgment of the Inquisitors, even to a deprivation from their honours, and all other worldly possessions. That of *Lateran*, under *Leo the Tenth*, which sets the Pope's Authority above that of Councils, directly contrary to what was defined by the Council of *Constance*, with the approbation of Pope *Martin the Fifth*, and to the Council of *Basil*, with the approbation of Pope *Eugenius the Fourth*.

Item, pro tempore existentem tanquam autoritatem super omnia concilia habentem, tam Conciliorum indicendorum — plenum jus & potestatem, nedum ex sacra Scriptura testimonio, dictis sanctorum Patrum — habere manifeste constet. Conc. *Lateran.* 5. Sess. 11. Bulla. Pastor aeternus. Labb. Collect. Tom. 14. Pag. 309.

¶ Cum se-  
lum Ro-  
manum  
Pontifi-

In a word, the endeavouring to assert that Councils are infallible, and giving them such an Authority as supercedes all examination, is so bold an undertaking, that many eminent persons in the Church of *Rome* it self, thinking it could never be effected, have not scrupled to declare for the other opinion. Among these was the famous Abbot of *Palermo*, principal of the Canonists, whose words are so very considerable, that I cannot omit repeating them. \* *I am of opinion, (says he) that if the Pope have better reasons, and better authorities than the Council, he ought to stick to his own judgment. For the Council may, and sometimes actually has erred, as particularly in the case of a Ravishers marrying with the woman on whom the Rape was committed. Saint Jerom's opinion was preferred before the Decree of a Council, because it was really better. For in matters of Faith, a single private mans judgment ought to be preferred before the Pope's, if this private judgment be grounded upon better reasons, taken out of the Old and New Testament. It signifies nothing to alledg the Council cannot err because Jesus Christ hath prayed for his Church that it fail not. In answer to this I say, that although a General Council do indeed represent the Church universally, yet it is plain the Universal Church is not there ready, but only by way*

\* Puto ta-  
men quod  
si Papa  
movere-  
tur melio-  
ribus ra-  
tionibus  
& autho-  
ritatibus,  
quam  
Concili-  
um, quod  
standum  
esset sen-  
tentia suæ.

tentia suæ. Nam & Concilium potest errare, sicut alias erravit, super Matrimonium dum inter raptorem & raptam. Dictum Hieronymi melius sentientis postea prælatum fuit statuto Concilii. Nam in concerentibus fidem etiam dictum unius privati præferendum esset dicto Papæ, si ille moveretur melioribus rationibus novi & veteris Testamenti, quam Papa. Nec obstat, si dicatur quod Concilium non potest errare, quia Christus oravit pro Ecclesiâ suâ, ut non deficeret; quare dico, quod igitur Concilium generale repræsentet totam Ecclesiam Universalem, tamen in veritate ibi non est verè Universalis Ecclesia sed repræsentativè: quia Universalis Ecclesia constituitur ex collatione omnium fidelium, unde omnes fideles orbis constituant istam Ecclesiam Universalem, cuius caput & sponsus est ipse Christus. Papa autem est Vicarius Christi, & non vere caput Ecclesie. Et ita est illa Ecclesia, quæ errare non potest. Unde possibile est, quod vera fides Christi, remanserit in uno solo, ita quod verum est dicere, quod fides non deficit in Ecclesiâ, sicut jus Universitatis potest residere in uno solo, aliis peccantibus. Panormitan. super S. Decret. Tit. de Election. Can. Significasti. Fol. 86.

of representation. For the Universal Church is made up of the company of all the Faithful, so that they are the Faithful throughout the whole world, that constitute the Church Universally, of which Christ is the Head, and the Spouse. The Pope is Christ's Vicar, but he is not truly the Head of the Church. And this Church it is, that cannot err. Thus then it may so happen that the true Faith of Christ may continue entire in a single person, and then the true Faith would not fail in the Church, as the rights of a Community may be preserved in a single member of it.

See now what the force of truth made one of the greatest Doctors of his Age say: The Catholick Church in his opinion consists only of the Faithful, it is of them only that Christ is the Head and the Spouse, to them alone he hath promised that they shall abide for ever. Councils may represent the Church, but it does not follow from thence that they are the Church. They may fall into Errors. The true Church which refuses to fall with them, may subsist in a very few, and these few by preserving the true Faith, will also preserve all the Priviledges of Jesus Christ's Church. All this is exactly what we assert in this case.

The Abbot of Palermo's opinion was likewise common to many of the Schools. Occam a famous Doctor among the Schoolmen, of the fourteenth Age hath composed a Dialogue on this Subject, where among other questions he discusses these six principal ones: 1. *Whether a Pope that is Canonically chosen can afterwards turn Heretic?* 2. *Whether the Colledg of Cardinals may fall into Heresy?* 3. *Whether it be possible for the Pope and Cardinals together to fall into it?* 4. *Whether it be so, for the Church of Rome, and Apostolick See to fall into it?* 5. *Whether a General Council may fall into it?* 6. *Whether even the Body of Christians may fall into it?* He affirms, that as many held the Negative in these Points, so there were a great many too, that held the affirmative; and he gives you the reasons urged by both sides for their several opinions. I know very well, that he was engaged in that silly quarrel between John the 22d, and the Franciscan Friars, which took up almost the whole life of that Pope, to know whether the Friars had any proper right to the bread they eat, or only the bare use of it; and whether Jesus Christ and his Apostles had likewise any proper right to the things they used. But this is no argument why such an Authors Testimony should not be unexceptionable, when he asserts as matter of fact that the six forementioned questions were disputed *pro and con*, among the Learned men of his time.

¶ Occam.  
Dialog.  
Lib. 5.  
Quæritur,  
utrum  
Papa ca-  
nonice e-  
lectus hæ-  
reticari  
possit. cap.  
1,2, 3,4,5.  
Utrum  
Collegium  
Cardinali-  
um possit  
hæreticâ  
pravitate  
maculari.  
Cap.6.&c.  
Utrum

Papa cum Collegio Cardinalium simul possit hereticâ pravitate maculari. Cap. 10. Utrum Ecclesia Romana seu sedes Apostolica valeat infici hæreticâ pravitate. Cap. 11. Utrum Concilium Generale Ecclesiæ in hæreticam pravitatem labi possit. Cap. 25. Utrum tota multitudo fidelium hæreticari possit. Cap. 29.

There is likewise a testimony of *John Francis Picus Mirandula*, which flourished in the beginning of the Fifteenth Age, which he gives us in his Theoremes concerning the Faith. After having said something to their opinion, who make either a Pope or a Council Infallible, he adds these words : *¶ Others there are that oppose this opinion, by saying that Councils may err, and actually have erred, as for instance, the Council of Arimini, the second Council of Ephesus, that of Constantinople concerning Images, and that of Aix la Chapelle, about the marriage of Virgins that were forced. And if these (say they) have erred, others may err as well as they; whereupon some bold, that such General Councils as the Pope does not preside in by his Authority, may err, but those where he does, cannot. To which others return, that the Council of Ephesus was lawfully convened, that the Pope's Legates presided in it, and yet the Faith was subverted there, and the regulation of this very matter was it that moved Pope Leo to call the Council of Chalcedon. They say further, that their pretending to find out remedies for knowing when two Councils clash, whether of the two a man ought to hold to, is an evident sign that General Councils may err.*

¶ Restituerunt alii, affirmantes errare posse Concilia, & jam errasse, ut Ariminiense illud tam celebriter damnatum, Ephelinum quoq; se cuius sensu aberraverunt.

cundum, item Constantinopolitanum, de ponendis imaginibus, sed & Aquisgranensem tentiæ de Matrimonio raptæ Hieronymi determinatio præponitur. Propterea, si hæc runt alia quoque errare posse dicunt. Quæ de re fatentur nonnulli, Concilia ea, sive Universales Synodos, in quibus Authoritas Pontificis summi non præsideret, errare posse; non autem ea quibus intervenit. Instant illi ex adverso Ephesinum secundum legitimè fuisse congregatum, præfidentibus etiam Legatis Pontificis; nihilominus in eversionem fidei agitatum, & in ejus correctionem à Leone Pontifice Chalcedonensem Synodum institutam. Rursus quia dari remedia videntur, dum Concilia discrepant cui videlicet standum adhærendumque magis, innuitur, aiunt, & aperte etiam significatur, aberrare Universalia Concilia posse. *J. Fran. Picus Mirand. de Fide & Ord. Credendi, Theorem. 4. Tom. 2. Pag. 259. Edit. Basl.*

It is certain then, that the Doctrine we now assert, when we affirm, that even the most numerous Assemblies are liable to error, that they may consist of such men as shall not be of the true Church, and consequently may fall off from their function, is neither a new Doctrine, nor any opinion we are driven to for the justifying our Reformation; but an old Doctrine, which the evidence of Truth hath always suggested to sincere and unbiased men. So that if *M. de Meaux* had but pleaded to reflect a little upon this, he would not have said, as he did, *That it was a Monster, the birth whereof was reserved for the time of the New Reformation.* It is convenient sometimes to be a little more advised and sparing in passing ones judgment. It would questionless be very foul to conclude from what hath been just now said against the absolute Authority and Infallibility of Ecclesiastical Assemblies, that we quite cast off all these humane Orders, for the external guidance and government of the Church. To fix any such opinions as this upon us, would be the unjuest thing in the world. Our Confessions

fessions of Faith ; our Discipline, and the Writings of our Authors, as well as our constant practice in all places, are a vindication of us in this particular, beyond all scruple or exception. First then, we hold the Ministry to be of Divine Institution, and consequently become necessary *by the necessity of a Command* ; and that the use of it is not absolutely necessary *by the necessity of the means*, for the Existence of the Church ; it is however of such excellent use and advantage in order to the preserving and propagating of the Church, that to go about to take it away, would be a manifest impiety. Secondly, We are of opinion, that in matters of Discipline relating to the publick, such as the manner and form of Religious Assemblies, of Administiring the Sacraments, and others of this kind, these should be left to the determination of Ecclesiastical Assemblies, and provided they bring in no Rite offensive to the Conscience, or contrary to the nature of the Evangelical Worship, an absolute obedience is due to them. Further yet, We allow these Ecclesiastical Assemblies a power of Censuring private persons, and proceeding to the last and highest Censure, that of Excommunication. And although we make no question at all, but this power may sometimes be abused by them, and unjust sentences pronounced, yet we think that out of veneration for the Order, a man ought to suffer such to be executed upon him, provided this do not engage us in any thing that may wound a good conscience.

As for matters of Faith, Worship, and general Rules for ordering mens Manners, we are perswaded that these Assemblies continuing the subordination to one another, may not only attain to the knowldg of them, by the Word of God, but that they must and ought to do so, for preventing the encrease of error, and the preserving Gods truth in its genuine purity. It is part of their office and businels to restrain the exorbitances of mens minds, to help the weak, and to the utmost of their power, cherish and maintain publick peace in the midst of this Society. But because on one hand the persons making these Assemblies are neither inspired, nor infallible, nor have any power over mens consciences ; and on the other hand, because no body can be sure, that they are good men, and will discharge their duty faithfully, there being so many several sorts of by-respects that influence men, when the Spirit of God does not guide them ; we think it a very faulty indifference, and a manifest slighting a man's own salvation, to receive their decisions blindfold, and upon trust, without any trial or examination of them at all. But still, though we think this examination highly just, and indispensably necessary, yet we think withal it is to be used with abundance of caution. Besides, that it must be undertaken in the fear of God, and with a disposition full of modesty, and Chritian humility ; besides that we must beg for grace from above, and

and not presume upon our own abilities ; besides that, we must bring along with us, not only charitable, but reverent, and respectful thoughts of such Assemblies, and judg favourably of them, till we have manifest conviction of the contrary. Besides all this, I say, the ignorant sort of people must not be too rash in offering to interpose their judgments about matters which either are not plainly express in Scripture, or naturally and necessarily deduced from thence. They must satisfie themselves with using these two ways, The Scriptures being silent, And the clear and plain instructions to be met with there. From its being silent, they must learn to reject what it does not teach, for strange and novel Doctrines. For whatever is not in Scripture, is not of Divine Revelation, and nothing that is not revealed by God, can be the object of Faith. By the clear and plain Instructions to be met with there, they must learn to embrace the Doctrines necessary for Salvation, and to reject all things contrary to the same, as dangerous and destructive Errors. And this is sufficient for the more ignorant sort of people.

As for other particulars, for which no certain rule can be given, neither from the Scriptures being silent, nor from the plain and clear instructions contained in it, nor by natural inferences deduced from thence, before they either receive them, or condemn them, they must endeavour to get information by such means as God hath discovered, and established in his Church ; and in the mean time entertain a good opinion of the Assemblies determinations. Thus they will preserve their Faith incorrupt, and sufficient for Salvation ; they will pay to Assemblies their due respects, and keep themselves in the peace and unity of the Church.

If the Gentlemen of the *Romish* Communion are not content with this, but still would have us believe whatever such Assemblies may determine blindfold, we must beg of them to consider, That to exclude thus all manner of amendment, is to open a mighty inlet to Error and Superstition ; 'tis an exposing believers to a manifest danger of having their Faith corrupted, and themselves damned ; in a word, 'tis perfectly to ruine Christianity, unless the goodness of God interpose with some remedy. Will not these Gentlemen, who are so ready at exclaiming against the inconveniences that may possibly proceed from our principle, at last open their eyes, and take a view of what their own hath actually produced already ? Transubstantiation, Purgatory, Indulgences, Merit of Good-works, worshipping of Images and Relicks, Service in an unknown Tongue, and a thousand other devotions, which have no great appearance of wisdom in them : These are the products of their pretended Infallibility ; and all this they are forced to defend now, because they would not lose the point of an implicit obedience.

And now if I were speaking any thing here concerning the occasion of this dispute between the Bishop of *Meaux*, and me, or the Circumstances that went before, or followed after our Conference, the world will easily perceive I do it, because this Bishop hath already been at the trouble of giving the publick a sufficient account of them. One word only I must say, which respects one of our Auditors, Mr. *Cotton*, who no doubt would have received a better Character from *M. de Meaux*, had he been so happy, as to be known to him more particularly. Mr. *Cotton* is a Gentleman of great honour, and wants neither apprehension, nor judgment ; he understands his Religion ; and though dispute be no part of his busines, is well versed in the main Controversies between us. If his modesty, or some other considerations prevailed upon him to say something that lookt like declining to engage in dispute with *M. de Meaux*, I do not think he ought to have taken his words in their strict and literal sence.

As for the difference between our two Relations, I leave it as *M. de Meaux* hath done, to the Reader's judgment. He hath observed very wisely, that let him say what he would of me, it was in my power to say the same of him : That all our Auditors were interested on one side or other ; and that the world hath nothing at all to do with our proceedings. To all which let me add, that I will not give any occasion for any private quarrel with a person I honour to that degree, that I do *M. de Meaux*.

The only thing I need say more, is concerning the method I have observed in this Book. It is divided into Two Parts. The first contains an Answer to the Instruction given *Mademoiselle de Duras*, by this Bishop, the day before our Conference ; together with an Examination of his Reflexions upon that Answer, beginning at the ninth, and going on to the thirteenth, inclusively. The second part contains a Relation of what past in our Conference, with an Examination of *M. de Meaux*'s Reflexions thereupon, which are his eight first. This method in my opinion is very natural.

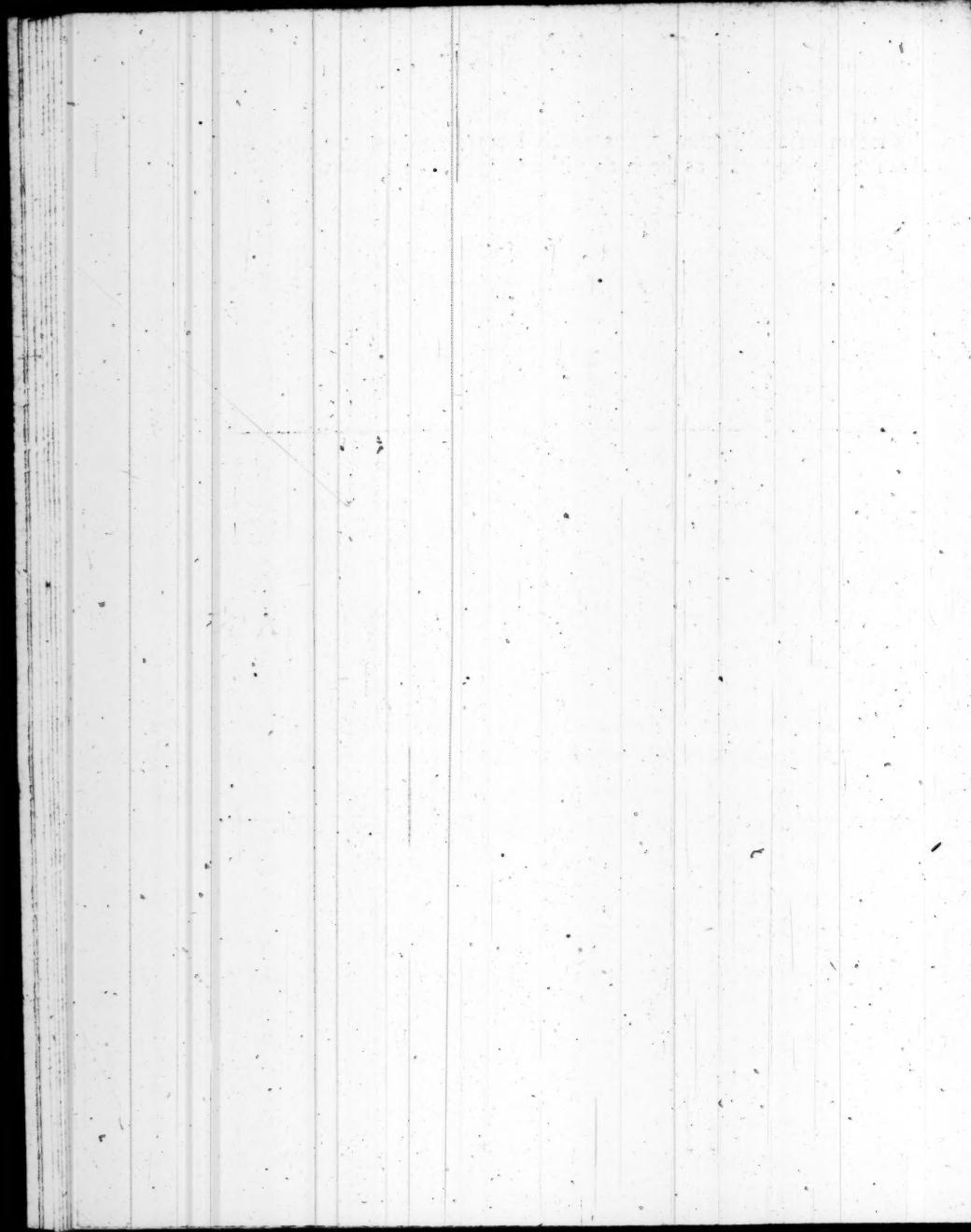
And now, as I have made it my busines to be very exact, and I ast nothing in his whole Book over, without giving a direct Answer to it ; so I hope that when he shall think fit to set Pen to Paper against me next, he will be as exact, and apply himself as close to the pinch of the Question ; and not imagine, as men commonly do, that provided they can but pick up here and there some loose passages, and from thence start a few difficulties and objections, there need no more be done, and this must go for a full Answer. I beseech

seech God to shed forth his Blessing upon an undertaking, wherein the only Ends I proposed to my self, were his Glory, and the Illustration of the Truth. Thus much I am encouraged to hope from his mercy; and that as he hath hitherto preserved his little Ship the Church, in the midst of the billows and storms of the world, he will still continue to preserve her, as he hath promised, even to the end of the world.

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AN  
ADVERTISMENT  
FROM THE  
TRANSLATOR  
TO THE  
READER.

WHEN persons of M. de Meaux's, and Mr. Claude's Character engage, and in a Controversy so important too, as that between the Church of Rome, and those who have separated from her; Men must naturally be desirous to know the management and issue of such a debate. For, besides what expectations the reputation of their Learning and Judgment might raise, This is a Cause, that scarce any body in our part of the World can be supposed perfectly indifferent in. Every Reader must look on These, not only as *Disputants*, but *Advocates*; and even they, who design no more than the gratifying their curiosity by perusing such Conferences, do yet insensibly find themselves affected with some degree of Concern.

The particular Argument insisted upon here, is likewise of the highest consequence; for it cannot but be a mighty help and direction, to know exactly how far we are obliged to comply with the Churches Decisions in matters of Faith; In what Cases we may venture to depend upon our own Collections from Reason and Scripture; and in what we must renounce these in deference to a higher Authority; Whether Councils and their pretended Infallibility ought to silence all, even the most just scruples, against whatever they shall please to determine; or whether Almighty God have not ordered the matter so, that without some recourse had to our private Judgments,

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## An Advertisement from the

even These cannot be received as a Rule of Faith to us; but, all imaginable care, and an impartial examination of the thing always presupposed, the decisive voice does of necessity belong at last to a mans own self.

M. de Meaux, we see, took a great deal of pains by a previous discourse upon this Topic, to prepare his Proselyte for the ensuing Conference; and he was, no doubt, in the right, to pitch upon this as the main Argument for her Conversion: It being indeed the very foundation and support of all the points in dispute between us; the best and most cunningly contrived expedient, to make men first embrace, and then persevere in Error and Superstition. For Protestants are usually apt to be squeamish, and cannot digest Opinions contrary to Sense and Reason; they sometimes grow so bold too, as to question their Adversaries integrity: Now what can be more satisfactory in such Circumstances, than to be invited into the Communion of a Church, which you are told, in all, even her most absurd Decrees, is continually assisted with the unerring guidance of the Holy Ghost; and put under a happy impossibility of deceiving her Members, tho illnatured people should imagine her so wicked to desire and endeavour it. This then being fixed as a first principle, the understanding is sufficiently subdued; for humane reasonings to interpose afterwards, would be impertinent and saucy; and so the hardest and most unpalatable Doctrines go glibly down, by the help of this excellent Vehicle, the Churches Authority and Infallibility.

The same method is observable among the Missionaries here in England, who after having tried us first with general Schemes of the disputable points, and then endeavoured to establish some of them particularly, to little or no purpose; do now at last take sanctuary in the Churches Despotick power, and begin to seem sensible, that either this or nothing must stand them in any stead. The debate upon this Head first began to grow warm upon occasion of the Royal Papers, which (because bad money is not privileged to pass unquestioned, tho it have the King's stamp upon it) were considered with a Judgment and Modesty becoming both a sincere zeal for Truth, and a dutiful honour for the Person whose Royal Name they bore. The several Answers, Vindications, and Replies upon this Subject, have since been followed by M. de Cordom's account of his Conference, as suiting very well the business then in hand: And when once the World had seen That, it was so reasonable Mr. Claude should be heard what he could say for himself, that I should not think this Translation needed any Apology, or Introduction, were it not for some Objections which I foresee it may be liable to. These therefore I am concerned to remove, that so the Book may be read without prejudice, and not expose men to mistaken notions of things, for want of a short, but necessary Advertisement.

In the first place I desire the Reader to take notice, that it is not to be expected Mr. Claude should in every circumstance express himself, as the Church of England would do at this day. The necessity of reforming from the Corruptions of Rome, was easily discerned in several Countries, and each National Church having

ving sufficient power to reform it self, was just and wise in asserting that rightfull Authority upon so emergent an occasion. But tho all did the thing, yet, all not conferring together, they did it not by the same methods, nor with like moderation and prudence. It was enough that they all agreed in the main points, and for the less material ones, that they maintained such a Charity, as not magisterially to censure or exclude one another for these little differences. This was the very way, whereby the Communion is still preserved inviolable among the Protestant Churches in all Nations, and is a mighty argument, that they retain the true spirit of Meekness and Christian Candor. Therefore in the writings of Forreigners, we must always make allowances for the Genius of that particular Church, whereof they are Members, and not be extremely nice and critical, except where we find a disagreement in some very substantial point. The Reformed Gallican Church and we are perfectly of one Judgment in all the most considerable parts of this dispute, concerning the Authority of the Church. As, That she hath no right at all to require an absolute and implicit obedience to her determinations; That the Scriptures are the only and perfect Rule of Faith; That every Man is concerned and obliged to examine by this Rule whatever is imposed upon him as an Article of Faith; and if he finds the Doctrine conformable thereto, readily and heartily to embrace, and adhere to it; but if evidently repugnant, by all means to reject it: That no Councils, even the most General, are to be received any further than they proceed in correspondence with this Divine Word; That they may, and actually have erred in deviating from it, and consequently their Decrees ought to undergo some Examination before a Man complies with them; But that, notwithstanding this possibility of failing, we ought to entertain very reverend and charitable presumptions in favour of such Assemblies; and, as not to cast them off without the clearest evidence of their having perverted the Truth; so, where no such evidence appears, to submit with the most respectful humility imaginable; looking upon them as excellent means for the preservation of the Christian Faith in its Unity and genuine Purity.

After so punctual an agreement in matters of the greatest consequence, what can it signify, if in some few others of less consideration, and more remote from the main business, there seem a small disparity? Mens Judgments must have some room left to exercise freely in, and diversity of Opinions in Circumstances, like Divisions in Musick, may very well be admitted, without breaking the main Cord, or doing the harmony any prejudice at all. 'Tis confess, the Divines abroad have taken up some notions distinct from ours, and particularly concerning the Church, its Visibility, Ministry, Constitution and Discipline; and it might well seem strange, if Mr. Claude should so far forget his Education and Country, as not to scatter some of these in his Writings. But I hope Englishmen may enjoy the benefit of his Discourses, without being obliged to subscribe every sentence, or espouse every punctilio contained in them. Whether the Gentlemen of the Romilly

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persuasion relying upon the Authority of M. de Meaux his name, called in so potent an Auxiliary from beyond the Seas, out of a just diffidence of their own strength here, They best can tell: This I am sure of, that it was but Justice to Mr. Claude, and the Cause he asserts, that he should be turned into the field too: And to let the World see, that after all M. de Meaux's vain-glorious boasts of a victory, and bold defiance of all the Doctors in Christendom, neither the Champion, nor the Cause, however vilified by him, are yet so feeble, that they need fear to encounter this Goliath. As many as understand the difference between us and the Reformed Protestants in France, are sensible, that we stand upon the fairer ground, by much far an engagement against the Church of Rome: But I was willing our Country-men should have the satisfaction of seeing, that it is M. de Meaux's misfortune to be reduced to straits, not only by a Church of England Pen, but by a Minister of his own Nation, who lay under some disadvantages which we do not; and that for all his Triumphant Preface before the Conference, That could no more escape a reply at home, than his Exposition has done abroad.

Another Objection against this Translation may be, That the Conference hath appeared in our Language already. I will not say it was in such a dress, as was by no means after the English Mode, and unworthy of so good an Original; for fear of provoking a severer censure upon the habit I have now clothed it in, to which I have reason to fear it is but too obnoxious. But setting aside all Reflections upon the defects of those who have gone before me, this single consideration is enough to justify and recommend the present attempt, that the Relation which was then Printed alone, is a very small part of the work. And when M. de Meaux's Narrative had appeared in such pomp, introduced by a long discourse upon the Church, and back with so many smart Reflexions, M. Claude's memory might have suffered extreamly, by concealing his abilities. And particularly, that notwithstanding the strain of confidence visible through all the Disputant's Writings of the Romish Communion, he could and did retort to as good purpose, and with as much advantage as Modesty and Reason usually have over Vanity. This may amuse unthinking people, who are apt to measure the weight of an Argument by the bigness of the words, and assurance of the Arguer; but the other only can prevail upon the Judicious and unprejudiced, and will force a conquest by its own strength.

One thing I have augmented this Edition with, which neither the former, nor indeed Monsieur Claude's own Original have taken care of, but 'tis what I thought highly necessary at this particular juncture. The unsincerity we have so often discovered in the late Advocates for Popery, makes us wish to take as little upon trust as may be. And therefore since our repeated complaints have been so ineffectual, I resolved to try if example would persuade them to any thing like Fidelity. For this reason all the Quotations from Authors have been carefully consulted, and at large transcribed by me in the Margin; where you will also find, if the

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Press do me right, the Edition of each Book, and if two have been consulted, the difference of Chapters in each, as particularly in St. Cyprian; so that any man may now see at the expence of a very little trouble, whether he be imposed upon or no. The same exactness may be taken notice of in many of our late Learned Writers; but still there are a sort of men that will never suffer themselves to be run down for want of Recrimination, and therefore tax us with negligence in this particular also. Whether party better deserve this accusation, the Author of *Pax Vobis*, if they please, shall be the Test, who hath the impudence to repeat over and over so obvious a thing as an <sup>\*</sup> Article of our Church, and always by his own additio-  
nary Gloss, make it speak quite another sense, than ever was designed for it.

\* He says  
Dialogue  
2d, pag.  
20. That

the Church of England in the 6th Article of their 39. says, We have no other Rule of Faith but Scripture, as each person of sound Judgment in the Church understands it, and what is proved by it; This he repeats, Dialog. 3. Pag. 30. and several times afterwards: whereas the words of the Article are these; *Holy Scripture containeth all things necessary to salvation: so that whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, \* is not to be required of any man, that it should be believed as an Article of Faith; or be thought requisite or necessary to salvation.* Where you see the Star, there was in the Form in Edward the 6th's Reign this Clause inserted, *although it be sometimes received of the Faithful, as godly and profitable for an Order and Com-  
munity.* But where are the expressions, or indeed the sense of his Citation in all this? And yet the force of all his Arguments turns so much upon this, that the very convincing him of unfin-  
cerity in this single allegation, is in effect an Answer to his whole Book.

As for the stile of this Translation, my care hath been to make it natural and easie, rather than elaborate and fine. As I did not enslave my self to a rendering every where Verbal, so I durst not take upon me to alter much, in order to being elegant. Having one of the Parties engaged in this Conference for an eminent instance, how shameful a disguise may be put upon things, and what material Changes may be made even in the main points, only for the greater neatness of the Discourse and Style.

I must own I have been a little bold in making this English Book to differ from Mr. Claude's French one in the method: For he, after his Introductory Discourse upon the Church, hath subjoined an Answer to M. de Meaux's five last Reflections, so dispatching that Subject entirely, and at once: And likewise to the Relation of the Conference, annexed a Reply to the other eight, which concern That: But I designing chiefly the benefit of those, who either did not understand, or could not procure the French, and intending it for a direct answer to M. de Meaux in English, did rather incline to follow the method of that Translation; consulting herein the Readers ease, when he shall think fit to compare them both together. And because some time hath past since M. de Meaux appeared here, I chose rather to divide This, than suffer so long a delay as the finishing of the whole must needs have

See Answ.  
to M. Con-  
Expot.  
Pag. xxi.  
&c. and  
Vindicat.  
Pag. 131.

have occasioned. But that men may not be impatient for the remaining Part, that also consisting of an Answer to M. de Meaux's Thirteen Reflections, will, I hope, be sent after this very speedily.

Eng. Pre-  
face.

Exposit. of  
Church of  
Engl. &c.  
Defence  
of Expos.

Lastly, Because M. de Meaux hath rightly observed, that the Authority of the Relations will in a great measure depend upon the Relator's Credit, I think my self obliged to give this intimation to as many as shall peruse them; That they would do well to remember how many, and what notorious falsifications M. de Meaux hath been charged with lately, and that charge made good a second time, by evident proofs of the thing, notwithstanding all the pains taken by his Vindicator to bring him off; whereas Mr. Claude, for any thing I ever heard objected to the contrary, is rectus in Curia, clear and unsuspected of any such sophistical indirect dealing. So that I mightily suspect M. de Meaux would not be able to do any great feats, if both sides were agreed to put the issue of the whole Controversy upon each Author's Integrity and Reputation.

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## An Answer to Monsieur de MEAUX's Book, &c.

SIR,

**I**Have a long time desired a sight of what you have now sent me. It was told me on all hands, That there was a Writing of Monsieur *de Condom*'s abroad, containing a relation of what past, in the Conference I had the honour to have with him at the Countess of Roye's; and some persons did even assure me, they had heard it read: But still I could meet with no body, capable of giving me the satisfaction I lately received by your means. This lays upon me a double engagement, both to return you my thanks for it, and at the same time, to gratify the curiosity you have to see what I wrote upon the same subject, the next day after our Interview. *M. de Condom* having profest it was not his desire, that what past between him and me should be publickly talked of, I thought my self under an obligation to confine what I had written, to my own Study; And this hath been hitherto very punctually observed by me. But now, since he hath thought fit to give out Copies of his, I have reason to believe, that in this respect he leaves me perfectly to my liberty, and is well satisfied I should do the same thing with mine. I have too great an opinion of *M. de Condom*'s Wisdom, not to follow his Example in this particular, and I promise my self from his Equity, that he will not find fault with me, for treading in his steps.

But because he hath been pleased to impart to us that Discourse also, which he had with *Mademoiselle de Duras* in private, the day before our Conference, you will think it convenient, that before I transcribe my Relation, I should first make some reflections upon That. Were this a discourse of such a nature, as common occasions or accidents are used to produce, where a man speaks without preparation or design, and delivers himself with all the freedom imaginable, I confess it were unjust to examine it strictly, and by rule. But seeing this was composed by *M. de Condom*, with a prospect of obliging *Mademoiselle de Duras* to change her Religion, and which seems a studied piece; a Discourse, which he hath joyned to the account of our Conference, as a considerable part of what past in this matter: Lastly, a Discourse, committed to Writing, upon supposal that it may be useful to others, and, for that purpose made in some measure publick; I cannot forbear looking upon it as a work of

*An Answer to M. de Condom's*

premeditation, and returning some answer to it accordingly. Besides, that you and I are concerned, as to what *Mademoiselle de Duras* hath done, to desire to know whether she had sufficient reasons to forsake your Communion, and embrace the *Romish*; and the examination of this Discourse will be a very proper means of clearing that point to us.

Conference with  
Mr. Claude,  
Page 2, 3.

Now it may be reduced to two principal Parts: In the first, *M. de Condom* makes it his busines to shew, that the Catholick or Universal Church, which we profess to believe in the Creed, is a Church thus defin'd: *A Society making profession to believe the Doctrine of Jesus Christ, and govern it self by his word*: Whence he infers, That it is a visible Society. He pretends also to make it appear, that to this Church, thus defin'd, belong all the promises found in Scripture. In the Second, He labours to answer an Objection, drawn from what happened to the Church of *Israel* heretofore, in which we often see the true Worship of God to have been changed and corrupted, and both the People and their Guides to have fallen into Idolatry.

These two Parts, *Sir*, we will prosecute in order, and by applying our selves to what is most material in them, will endeavour, by the assistance of God's Grace, to make the Truth so evident, as shall remove all difficulties.

*The first Part of M. de Condom's discourse examin'd.*

Conference, p. 2.

"Instead of granting the Ministers (says *M. de Condom*) to believe all the Fundamentals of the Faith, we shew that there is one Article of the Creed they believe not, which is that of the Universal Church. 'Tis true, they say with the mouth, *I believe the Catholick or Universal Church*, as the *Arrians*, *Macedonians*, and *Socinians* say with the mouth, *I believe in Jesus Christ, and in the Holy Ghost*; But as there is reason to accuse them of not believing these Articles, because they believe them not as they ought, nor according to their true sense; so if we shew the Pretended Reformed, that they believe not as they ought, the Article of the Catholick Church; we may truly say, that in effect they reject so important an Article of the Creed.

Conf. p. 3.

"You must know then, what is meant by this expression, The Catholick or Universal Church; and upon this I lay for my ground, That in the Creed, which was only a bare declaration of Faith, this Term must be taken in its most proper and most natural signification, and such as is most used among Christians. Now all Christians by the name of the Church, understand a Society, making profession to believe the Doctrine of Jesus Christ, and govern it self by his Word. If this Society

" ciety makes this Profession, 'tis consequently visible; That this is the proper and genuine signification of the word *Church*, such as is known by every one, and used in common discourse; I desire no other witness than the Pretended Reformed themselves.

The sequel will declare, whether the scandal of dealing with that Article of the Universal Church, as the *Arrians*, *Macedonians*, and *Socinians* do, would not better agree with the Character of such as follow *M. de Condom's* Opinion, than the Reformed Ministers. This we shall presently be able to judge of; and to that purpose four Questions must be examined.

The first is, Whether the sense of that Article in our Creed ought to be restrained (according to *M. de Condom*) to the Church here on Earth, or extended farther?

Secondly, Whether this be a good and sufficient definition of the Church upon Earth; *A Society making profession to believe the Doctrine of Jesus Christ, and govern it self by his word.*

Thirdly, Whether this Church upon Earth be visible, or invisible? or whether it be both, considered in a different sense, and different respects?

Fourthly, To what Church the Promises of Jesus Christ do belong; whether to that defined by *M. de Condom*, or to that which we are about to define? These four Questions will include, not only all the plausible things *M. de Condom* hath said in this first part of his Discourse; but likewise all the other sophistical Objections that are usually put to us upon this subject.

Quest. 1. *Whether the sense of that Article in our Creed ought to be restrained, (according to M. de Condom) to the Church here on Earth, or extended farther?*

In order to resolving the first Question, you will please, *Sir*, to give me leave, to explain briefly that Article of our Creed, concerning the Catholic or Universal Church, and how we understand it, that so you may be able to judge, whether *M. de Condom* had reason to accuse us of not taking it in its true sense: And this I shall immediately enter upon.

We think then (this being such a profession of Faith, as ought to embrace its object entire, and in the utmost extent, and not in any one part only) that by the *Universal Church* must be understood, not barely the visible body, or company of the Faithful at present upon Earth, but that body or company of all the Faithful, which have been, are, or at any time shall be, from the beginning to the end of the World. Thus the Universal Church is, That which is already triumphant in Heaven, that which is now militant on Earth, and that which is not yet in the world,

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but shall be in succeeding Ages. All these three Churches do really make but one, because united together in the eternal purpose of God, appointed to know one and the same Word, to partake of one and the same Spirit, and to inherit one and the same Glory. They are but one Family, for they have the same Father, the same Rights and Priviledges, the same Hopes, and are called to the same Duties. They are but one body, under the protection and Guidance of Jesus Christ, their only Head, who is, as the Scripture says, *The same yesterday, to day, and for ever.* And this is our sense of the Church, called in the Creed, Catholick, or Universal.

*Heb. 13.8.*

The Latitude we here take the Church in, hath displeased *M. de Condom*; he says we put a wrong sense upon the Article; and to understand it thus, is in effect to reject it. He is of opinion it should be confined to this part upon Earth, which he defines, *A Society making profession to believe, &c.*

But in the first place *M. de Condom* must allow us to tell him, that Saint

*Augustine* however hath taught us to explain the Church in our Creed after

this manner. That Father indeed went farther than we do, for he hath not scrupled to include in this notion, the Angels confirmed in Grace. Here † (says he, and 'tis in his very Exposition of the Creed, that he says it) *we must take the Church whole and entire, not only for that part of it upon earth, which praises the name of God from the rising of the Sun, unto the going down parte, quæ thereof, singing to God a new Song, since their deliverance from their former Captivity; but also for that other part which is in Heaven, and never was separated from the Divine presence, the Blessed and Holy Angels.* \* The Body of Christ (says he in another place) is the Church, not this, or that Church, but which is diffused over the whole world; not that which is made up of men now alive, but consisting of those which have been before us, and those which shall come after us even to the end of the world. For the whole Church being composed of all the faithful, in as much as all the faithful are the Members of Jesus Christ, hath Jesus Christ for its Head, and this Head though exalted high in the Heavens, does notwithstanding still continue to govern his body.

† *Ecclesia tota hic accipienda est, non solum ex parte, quæ terrenis, à foliis oru ad occasum usq; laudans nomen Domini, & post vetustatem captivitatis cantans canticum novum; verum etiam ex illa quæ in cœlos semper ex quo condita est adhaesit Deo.* Aug. Enchir. ad Laurens. Cap. 46.

\* *Corpus ejus est Ecclesia, non autem ista, aut illa, sed toto orbe diffusa. Nec ea quæ nunc est in hominibus qui praesentem vitam agunt, sed ad eam pertinentibus eriam his, qui fuerunt ante nos, & his qui futuri sunt post nos usq; in fine m sœculi: Tota enim Ecclesia consistit ex omnibus fidelibus, quia fideles omnes membra sunt Christi, habet illud caput positum in cœlestibus, quod gubernat corpus suum.* Aug. in Psal. 56.

*M. de Condom* must likewise allow us to tell him, that the Catechism of the Council of Trent hath given this sense of the Church in our Creed.

|| *The*

## Discourse concerning the Church.

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¶ The Church (it says, and 'tis in the very Explication of this Article) hath ¶ Catech. two parts, one of which is called Triumphant, the other Militant. The Triumphant Conc. Trid. is that illustrious assembly of the Blessed, and all those who have vanquished and ad Paroch. triumph'd over the World; the Flesh and the Devil, and who being now delivered 9. Numb. from the miseries of this life, enjoy everlasting rest and felicity. The Church Militant 7,8,9. Ec- Par. 1. Art. cies is the company of all the Faithful yet alive upon earth, which is therefore called. Mi- litant, because they are engaged in a perpetual war with these most deadly enemies, por- tem due Satan, the World, and the Flesh. Let us not from hence imagine that they are num sunt two distinct Churches, but as was said, two parts of one and the same Church, one partes, of which is gone before, and already possest of its Heavenly Country. The other daily quarum following after, till at length, being united with our Saviour, it shall rest above in altera Tri- umphans, altera Mi- litans vo-

catur. Triumphant est, cœtus ille clarissimus, & felicissimus beatorum spirituum, & corum, qui de mundo, de carne, de iniquissimo demone triumpharunt, & ab hujus vita, molestiis liberi, ac tuti, æterna beatitudine fruuntur. Militans vero Ecclesia est, cœtus omnium fidelium, qui adhuc in terris vivunt: quæ ideo Militans vocatur, quod illi cum immanissimis hostibus, mundo, carne, Sathanæ perpetuam sit bellum. Neque idcirco tamquam duas esse Ecclesias censerendum est, sed eisdem Ecclesiæ, ut antea diximus, partes duas sunt, quarum una antecessit, & cœlesti patria jam potitur; altera indies sequitur, donec aliquando cum Salvatore nostro conjuncta in tempora felicitate conquefacat.

Again, We must desire *M. de Condom*'s leave to say, that the very Title of *Catholick* or *Universal* used in the Creed, does lead us to this extended notion of the Church. This to me seems evident for two reasons. First, that this Title is given the Church to distinguish it from all false Churches, which do neither exist always, nor every where, but spring up and die away in some particular places, and at some certain times, as having no found nor lasting principle. Secondly, that this Title was to distinguish it from particular Churches, which are but members of this great Body collected by Christ, and separated from the world, that he might sanctifie it to himself. Whence it follows, that when we say the *Universal* or *Catholick* Church, by this is plainly meant the Church intire, and at large, without exception, or limitation, either as to time or place.

Lastly, *M. de Condom* must allow us to tell him, that we are brought to this notion by what follows in the Creed, *The Communion of Saints*, which terms explain this of the *Catholick Church*. For the Saints are not only persons now living upon Earth, but those also that reign in Heaven, and those which shall be to the worlds end; and 'tis with all these that we are in Communion. If the Communion of Saints were to be understood of such only, as make profession to believe in *Jesus Christ*, and govern themselves by his word; This could be no other than an external Communion by living under the same Ministry,

*An Answer to M. de Condom's.*

Ministry, and partaking of the same Sacraments, which good and bad men enjoy equally. And certainly this would fall far short of so great, so Majestic an expression, and consequently could not deserve a room in our Creed.

Conser-  
ence, P<sup>g</sup>. 2.  
ence, P<sup>g</sup>. 2.

*But (says M. de Condom) in the Creed, which was only a bare declaration of faith, this term must be taken in its most proper and most natural signification, and such as is most used among Christians.* I own it must be taken in its most proper and most natural sense, but even this supplies us with a fresh argument against him; it being certain, that the most proper and most natural sense is to take the *Universal Church* for the company of all those that are truly the faithful, separated from the world by the Word and Holy Spirit of God, according to the purpose of his Election from the beginning to the end of all things. I acknowledge the word *Church* when used in a Civil sense, as for instance when spoken of the people of *Israel*, does most properly signify an external and visible company, and so far I am of *M. de Condom's* mind, both as to what he urges out of the *Acts*, and from the *Septuagint Translation*. But still I assert, that this word when applied to a Christian Society, does not properly denote a visible Congregation, or an outward profession of the Faith, and no more; but chiefly an inward calling, a spiritual communion, and such as that outward is only a consequence of, and does depend upon. A man must be utterly ignorant of Christianity to deny this truth. The *Church* then is a name for something within, and not barely to signify what passes without; so that implying an inward communion, when the Title of *Universal* is put to it, it must needs mean the whole body of true and faithful Christians. By the same reason I affirm this to be its most natural signification. When we say in plain terms the *Universal Church*, nothing can be more natural than to understand the whole company of Gods children, as opposed to the men of the world, and *children of this generation*. Nothing more natural to Faith, and especially a Confession of Faith, than to interpret a term expressing the object of Faith, not in a restrained sense, which gives only a partial Idea of the thing; nor in an ambiguous sense, which gives a confused and doubtful one; but in a sense that shall be perspicuous and full.

As to the common use of the word, *M. de Condom* must pardon me, if I say there is a fallacy in his argument. For supposing it true (which really it is not) that all Christians of this and some ages last past had confined the term *Universal Church*, to the Church at present upon Earth; suppose the pretended Reformed (to use *M. de Condom's* own expression) did commonly understand this term so, yet still 'tis a trick to attempt to adjust the sense of the Creed, by that which some latter ages have fixt upon it. 'Tis just as if I should go about to explain the terms of our language by what will be

be in vogue two or three hundred years hence. For who does not see that the acceptation alters, and words are mightily removed from their first and genuine signification?

What I have alledged from St. *Austin*, and the *Trent-Catechism*, plainly convict *M. de Condom* of a mistake either in matter of fact, or point of right. If the matter of fact deposited before be true, *That all Christians understand by the Church, a Society making profession, &c.* He is out in point of right, for St. *Austin* and the *Trent-Catechism* shew, that the *Church* in our Creed is to be otherwise understood. But if this Rule hold, that the word in the Creed must be taken in such a sense, as is most in use among Christians, he errs in matter of fact, for St. *Austin* and the *Catechism*, taking it as we see, 'tis manifest the Christians of their times did not understand it as *M. de Condom* does, of a *Society making profession to believe, &c.*

It is questionless more reasonable to say, that the term *Universal Church* in our Creed, should be interpreted in a way most agreeable to Scripture stile, but this very thing quite overthrows *M. de Condom*'s pretensions. For the Scripture when speaking of the *Church*, as the Creed does, with regard to its Universality, does always mean the whole body of the Faithful, and not one part only. Thus St. *Paul* hath taken it in that excellent passage, *God hath given Jesus Christ to be the Head of the Church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.* In the fifth Chapter of that Epistle, he repeats it no less than six times in the same sense: *The husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the Church: The Church is subject to Christ as the wife is to her husband. Christ loved the Church, and gave himself for it, that he might present it to himself a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle. Christ nourisheth and cherisheth the Church. This is a great mystery concerning Christ and the Church.* Thus again *Col. 1. Christ is the head of the body the Church, who is the beginning, the first-born from the dead.* So lastly *Heb. 12. Ye are come to Mount Sion, the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of Angels, to the general assembly and Church of the first-born, which are written in Heaven.* For the Apostle does not mean the *Church Triumphant* only, as *M. de Condom* would perswade us, but the whole body of those whom God hath enrolled in the Book of his Predestination, whether already taken up to Glory, or such as are already justify'd and sanctified upon Earth, but not yet glorify'd, or those whom he will call effectually hereafter, and justify, in order to their Glorification.

Chap. 5.  
Ver. 23.  
Ver. 24.  
Ver. 25.  
Ver. 27.  
Ver. 29.  
Ver. 32.  
Ver. 18.  
Ver. 22.  
Ver. 23.

I conclude this Question with one observation, which ought not to give *M. de Condom* any offence, because the greatest demonstration of respect to an adversary, is the removing every little objection made by him. I observe then that his Argument (which contains all this part of his Discourse, neither does, nor according to the rules of reasoning, can conclude any thing

thing at all. He would know the meaning of *Universal Church* in our Creed, *We must take this term* (says he) *in the most proper signification, and such as is most in use among Christians.* I grant it. *Now all Christians* (as he goes on) *by the name of Church understand a society, &c. and for this I desire no other witness, than the Pretended Reform'd themselves.* Who does not perceive that this concludes nothing? He should have said, *All Christians understand by the Church Universal, a society, &c. and of this I desire no other witness, &c.* Thus he should have delivered himself, if he would argue regularly. All this while *M. de Condom's* proof all through the sequel of his discourse runs not upon the term in his Proposition, *The Universal Church*; but on that single term *the Church*, between which there is a wide difference; for the *Church* may well be taken in a sense, that the *Universal Church* can by no means admit of. Indeed had *M. de Condom* said, *All Christians by the Church Universal, understand a Society making profession, &c. and of this I desire no other witness, than the Pretended Reform'd themselves*, we should have answered him, That the Pretended Reform'd never understood by the *Universal Church*, a *Society making profession to believe, &c.* because according to their Tenets, the *Church Universal* rôle a great way further than *this Society making profession, &c.* So that we should immediately have put a stop to his Argument, and he could never have effected what he hoped for from it.

Quest. 2. *Whether M. de Condom's be a good and sufficient definition of the Church upon Earth, A Society making profession to believe the Doctrine of Jesus Christ, and govern it self by his Word.*

By this decision of our first question, I think, Sir, it appears that *M. de Condom* had no ground for accusing us of taking that Article of our Creed concerning the *Universal Church*, in a wrong sense. Let us now proceed to the second Enquiry, whether *M. de Condom* have given a good and sufficient definition of the *Church upon Earth*, in calling it, *A Society making profession to believe the Doctrine of Jesus Christ, and govern it self by his Word.*

Now this Question being of such mighty importance, that upon the determination of it, the whole Controversie betwixt us and the *Rome*'s touching the *Church*, does entirely depend, I was amazed to see, that he did not think fit to clear it, either to *Mademoiselle de Duris*, or those other *Prophelytes* for whom the perusal of this Discourse was intended. Methinks, when men go about to make Converts, they ought not upon pretence of saving them a little trouble, to decline any instructions that may be necessary for their satisfaction; and being perswaded, that the *Church of Rome's* pretensions are just, I should not fear to have the Grounds

## Discourse concerning the Church.

9.

Grounds of them examined, but suppose they will be found strong and impregnable. How comes it to pass then that *M. de Condom* was pleased to pass by so fundamental a Question? And how could he satisfy himself with barely propounding his definition, and saying only, that This was what all Christians understand by the name of a Church.

However I shall be bold to say, that this is neither all, nor indeed the main part of what Christians do, or ought to understand by it; and that his definition is defective by at least one half; to which therefore I shall oppose another, which I assert to be what all Christians ought to understand by the name of Church, viz. *A Society of such persons, as making profession to believe the Doctrine of Jesus Christ, do truly and effectually believe it; and making profession to govern themselves by his word, do really and effectually govern themselves by it.* Our busines now is to know which of these two is a good and lawful definition; whether that given us by *M. de Condom* in agreement with the Doctors of his Communion, or this of mine, in agreement with all Protestants? That is to say, we are concerned to know, whether the nature and essence of the Church consist barely in externals and appearances; or whether something of reality be not required? whether Hypocrisy, and superficial Cheats can make men true members of the Church? or whether something of truth be not necessary also, to know whether wicked men, worldlings, and reprobates, provided they make an outward profession, and can but dissemble handsomely, are real members of Christ's mystical body, or whether this privilege do not belong to those that are truly the Faithful? Here lies the pinch of the Question, which in my opinion would have resolved it self, had but *M. de Condom* propounded it fairly: For methinks 'tis very hard to acquiesce so far in his definition. But not to insist on this first prejudice, let us examine the matter throughly.

I. The Scripture represents the Church to us, as the product and execution of God's eternal decree of Predestination, or Election; and besides it teaches us, that God in electing and predestinating men, does it not to a mere outward profession of Faith and Holiness, but to an effectual Faith, and true Holiness: And consequently, effectual Faith and Holiness are of the nature and essence of the Church, and not an outward profession only. The consequence is manifest; For the best way to discover the nature and essence of anything, is to take it according to its own Author's first Idea and design; supposing that he does not (as we are all agreed God does not) swerve at all from his design in the execution of it. The Church then being God's own work, the surest means to discern what that is, will be to inform our selves of God's design, if

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we

Ephes. 1.3, we can but find out that. Now this we find in the Election, *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, (says St. Paul in the name of the whole Church) who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings, in heavenly places in Christ; According as he hath chosen us in Him, before the foundation of the world. And a little after, He gathers together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are in earth, even in him; In whom we have obtain'd an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him, &c.*

Ver. 10, 11. Joh. 17. 9. To this relates that saying of Christ, *I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me, for they are thine.* Where by opposing the world, for which he does not pray, *to those whom his father had given him,* 'tis plain he understands the Church; and his meaning is, that the Father hath given them to Jesus Christ, because it was his by his purpose of Election. This appears further, from the words that immediately follow, *And all mine are thine, and thine are mine;* for this mutual reciprocation of Good between his Father and Him (if I may so term it) is capable of no other sense but this, in the sequel of his discourse. My Church are thine Elect, and thy Elect are my Church; they who are mine, as my people, are thine, as thy Elect; my Communion, and thy Election, have the same measures, the same extent, and do both comprehend the same persons: So that the Election is nothing else but God's design and project of the Church; and the *constituting of a Church,* is the putting that design of Election in Execution. *Blessed (says David) is the man whom thou chusest, and causet to approach unto thee, that he may dwell in thy courts.* These Courts are the Church of God, and men enter into them only by virtue of God's Election. *God hath saved us* (says the Apostle) *and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus, before the world began.* We must therefore come to the knowldg of the Church by his Eternal purpose, and to know that, we must consult his Holy Word. *He hath chosen us* (says St. Paul) *that we should be holy, and without blame before him in love. Having predestinated us to the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself; and, that we should be to the praise of the glory of his grace.* He does not say a bare profession of Holiness, but a real Holiness; he does not say an appearance of adoption, but a true adoption; he does not say an external conversion, but an internal; That is, such as may illustrate the glory of God. God hath predestinated us to a true Faith, and not an appearance of Faith; to a sincere and substantial Regeneration, not to a shadow or colour of it. 'Tis past a doubt then, that a mere outward profession cannot give us a full definition of the Church; but true Faith and Regeneration are necessary parts of the Idea we have of it.

II. The Scripture, when speaking of the Church with reference to God, gives it such appellations as can by no means be restrain'd to a mere profession, or allow us to think it can be composed of wicked persons. It calls the Church, (a) *Jerusalem which is above*, (b) *the Heav- (a) Gal. 4.*  
*venly Jerusalem*, the *City of the living God*, (c) *the Holy Hill of Sion*, (d) *the Israel of God*, (e) *A Holy Nation*, a peculiar people; (f) *the inheritance of God*, (g) *the habitation of God through the spirit*, (h) *the house of God*, (i) *the temple of God*, (k) *His holy Priesthood, His spiritual house*, (l) *His royal Priesthood*, (m) *His purchased possession*, (n) *the people of God*. Tell me now, I pray, if the energy of these expressions is not admirably answer'd, by being reduced to a bare external profession? (e) *1 Pet. 2. 9.*  
 Would God have sent us a new *Jerusalem*, a new *Sion*, a new *City from above*, and make this up of Righteous and Wicked, Hypocrites and true Believers indifferently? Does not the Apostle understand it so, when he says, that (o) *Jerusalem is free, that her children are not in bondage*; i. e. those who are the *Children by promise*, that they shall not be cast out like *Children of the bondwoman*, but shall be *Heirs*; and that there is the same difference between this and the other *Jerusalem*, that was between the two (k) *1 Pet. 3. 17.*  
 Wives of *Abraham*, *Sarah and Agar*? Would God make him a new *Ta- (l) Ibid v. 9.*  
 bernacle, a new *House*, a new *Temple*, and build it of holy and profane materials indifferently? St. Peter (p) did not intend it so, *You (says he) as lively stones are built up a spiritual house*. Would God separate to himself a new people, a new *Israel*, a new Nation, from all other Nations, and require from it no more than an outward profession, which alone works (m) *Eph. 1. 14.*  
 no regeneration at all? To shew that God himself never intended this, observe how himself speaks, (q) *This shall be the covenant that I will make with (p) *1 Pet. the house of Israel, After those days (saith the Lord) I will put my law in 2. 5.* their inward parts, and write it in their hearts, and will be their God, and they (q) *Jer. 31. shall be my people*. We must take notice, that all these names above mentioned, are derived from the old figures of the Mosaical dispensation; this the very reading of them plainly testifies. Now this very thing makes directly against *M. de Condom's* definition: For as it is essential to a figure, to consist of something External and Corporeal, so is it equally essential to the thing figured, to consist of something Internal and Spiritual. The Church therefore is no longer a *Jerusalem*, an *Israel*, a people linked together by outward bands only; this would correspond well enough with the figures of the old Law; but it is a people, an *Israel*, a *Jerusalem*, united and compacted by the inward bands of the same Faith, and the same Sanctification. This very term [*the Church*] is of it self sufficient to confirm this truth; *M. de Condom* acknowledges the Christians had it from the *Jews*, which is true. He says the *Jews made use of it to signify the Conf. p. 3.**

*visible Society of God's people; the Assembly which makes profession to serve him. I agree with him in that too. He adds, That the Christians have kept it in the same sense. I am not of that opinion. This word, when applied to the figure, can signify no more than a visible outward Assembly; but when to the thing figured, it must of necessity imply something more, it must denote an inward community, a company, not of Bodies only, but Souls too; for it is not enough that a confession be made with the mouth, men must also believe with the heart unto Righteousness.*

Rom. 10.  
1c.

III. This will be yet more evident, if you reflect on some other appellations given to the Church, with relation to Jesus Christ. For it is called, *His flock, his sheep, his spouse, his sister, his dove, his well-beloved, his body, a Body whereof He is the head, a Body that is his flesh and his bones, a house built upon him, as upon a Corner-stone, the sanctified in Jesus Christ, the Children which God hath given him*, and other expressions like these. Now who can ever imagine these glorious Titles should import no more than an outward profession? or that profane persons and reprobates can have any share in them? It is *his flock*, but what flock? *Fear not little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.* They are *his sheep*, but how, *My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. And I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.* It is *his Spouse*, and *his Sister*; but in what respect? *Thou hast ravished my heart, my sister, my spouse, thou hast ravished my heart.* It is *his Dove*, but why *his Dove?* *My dove, my undefiled is but one, the daughters saw her, and blessed her.* She is *his well-beloved*, but wherefore *his Well-beloved?* *As the lily among thorns, so is my beloved among the daughters.* It is *his Body*, but how *his body?* *The edifying of the body of Christ; till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.* He is *its Head*, but what sort of Head? *From him the whole body fitly joyned together, and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, maketh increase of the body, to the edifying of it self in love.* It is *his flesh and his bones*, but how these? *No man ever hateth his own flesh, but nourisheth, and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the Church.* It is a *structure built upon him*, but how? *In him all the building fitly framed together, groweth into an holy temple in the Lord.* They are the *sanctified in Jesus Christ*, but how *sanctified?* They are *such as in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.* They are the *Epistle of Jesus Christ*, but in what regard the Epistle? *Written not with Ink, but with the spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshly tables of the heart.* It is *his People*, but what kind of people? *Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power, in the beauties of holiness.* They are the *Children*

Luke 12.  
32.

John 10. 27.  
28.

Cant. 4. 9.

Cant. 6. 9.

Cant. 2. 2.

Ephes. 4. 12, 13.

Ibid. v. 16.

Eph. 5. 29.

Eph. 2. 21.

1 Cor. 1. 2.

2 Cor. 3. 3.

Ps. 110. 3.

dren which God hath given him; But wherefore were they given him? To exhibit them one day, saying, Behold I, and the children which thou hast given me. Thou hast given me power over all flesh, that I should give eternal life Heb. 2.13. to as many as thou hast given me. Can any man after all this grant, that the Church should be defined, *A Society making profession to believe, &c. or imagine that Hypocrites belong to this mystical Divine Body?*

IV. If we search the Scripture yet further, we shall find other Arguments in confirmation of this Truth. Among these I reckon the predictions concerning the Church of Christ, to be met with in the Prophets. Thus it is described by Moses; *The Lord thy God will circumcise thy heart, and Deut 30.6. the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live. There shall be (saith Isaiah) a high-way, and Isa. 34.8,9. a way, it shall be called the way of holiness, the unclean shall not pass over it, but it shall be for those; the wayfaring men, tho' fools, shall not err therein: No lion shall be there, nor any ravenous beast shall go up thereon; it shall not be found there, but the redeemed shall walk there.* And in another place, *All thy children shall be taught of the Lord, and great shall be the peace of thy children, In Isa. 54.13. righteousness shalt thou be established.* In the same sense Jeremias speaks of it, *They shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord, for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.* Ezekiel says as much; *I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean. I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments.* In like manner Joel, Then (says Joel 3.17. he) *shall Jerusalem be holy, and there shall no strangers pass through it any more.* Likewise Zechariah, *In that day there shall be no more the Canaanite in the house of the Lord of hosts.* What can all these great and wonderful promises mean? This Circumcision of Heart? This way of Holiness where the unclean shall not pass over? This keeping out of Lions and ravenous beasts? This being taught of God? This universal knowledg, joyned with a pardon of sins? This pouring out of the spirit, which shall take away the hearts of stone, and change them for hearts of flesh? This Holiness of Jerusalem, so as to suffer no stranger, nor Canaanite in the midst of her? I say, What signifies all this, if the form and essence of a Church consist in a bare profession; and if this Communion can be composed of unjust, as well as just, of Bad as well as Good men?

V. St. Paul in his first Epistle to the *Corinthians*, endeavours to make us apprehend the Church aright, by resembling it to a man's body. *As the body (says he) is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many are one body, so also is Christ.* For by one spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free, and have all been made to drink into one spirit. I need not here observe, that by Christ he means the Mystical body of Christ, That is, his Church; this is manifest of it self, and he explains himself so afterwards: *You (says he) are the body of Christ, and members in particular.* All we have to do, is to enquire, what he makes to be the principle and band of this unity here attributed to the Church, and with respect to which he likens it to the body of a Man. And this is easily understood; for in his opinion it is the spirit, and consequently not a bare profession. But still it may be doubtful what Spirit this is: Is it a spirit of direction only, that attends upon the Clergy, and prevents their giving erroneous determinations, and publickly professing any such, how wicked soever the persons exercising this Authority be? By no means. It is the spirit which the faithful receive, and whereof Baptism is a sign: *For (says the Apostle) we are all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free, and have all been made to drink into one spirit.* Thus you see the band and principle of the Churches Unity. The evident consequence whereof is, that inward regeneration is essential to it, and that as many as have not been washed by, nor made to drink into this heavenly spirit, cannot be parts of this body.

VI. But the Apostle carries on his Argument yet further; for he takes notice, that although God had put a difference between the members, as there is likewise in those of the Church; yet he had so qualified this difference, *That there should be (says he) no schism, or division in the body, but that the members should have the same care one of another; so that whether one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it.* From hence it is plain, that according to St. Paul, there is as real an agreement between the members of the body of the Church, as there is between those of a humane body, without any contrariety or discord, and that this good correspondence is founded on that Unity which makes each part to have one and the same common interest. Now what true agreement, or common concern can there ever be, between the members of Christ, and members of the Devil? Or in St. Paul's own phrase, *What fellowship between light and darkness?* What continual enmity on the contrary must there needs lurk under the Covert of such an untoward seeming Peace, as a bare outward profession may make?

Every

Every one aims at advancing his own Master's honour, so that the sentiments, designs, and methods of the Servants must of necessity carry as great opposition as there is between the Masters they serve.

VII. In his Epistle to the *Galatians* he gives us another description of the Church very like this: *As many (says he) as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female, for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.* Thus far respects Communion with the same Christ, which is the very thing that constitutes the Unity of the Church, and is the essential form of it; so that persons out of this Communion are not of the Church, because they have no part in the Churches Unity. If you would now know what kind of Communion this is, attend to what follows, *If ye be Christ's, Ye are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to promise.* So that St. Paul does not treat of a Communion consisting in a bare outward profession, but such a one as makes men *Mystical Children of Abraham*, and heirs of God.

VIII. In his Epistle to the *Romans*, he thought it not enough to say, *Rom. 8. 1. They that are in Christ Jesus, walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit*, which yet is intimation sufficient, what nature that Communion is of, that makes this *Mystical Body of Christ* the Church; but he goes further, and is express afterwards, *If any man have not the spirit of Christ, he is none of his.* Words of such strength as will not allow us to acknowledge wicked men belong to the Church unless we should make a Church that is not Christ's. If the Church formally, and as such, be Christ's, this must be true of all that are of the Church, and participate of that which constitutes it such. Now according to *M. de Condom's* definition, wicked men and reprobates may be of the Church; therefore in his opinion they may be Christ's. Notwithstanding St. Paul avers, that *they that are Christ's, live not according to the flesh; and that as many as have not Christ's spirit, are none of his*; so that he is of a judgment different from *M. de Condom's*. If an outward profession alone be the common band, and that which constitutes the Church, we are driven to maintain one of these three things: Either that such a profession does confer the spirit of Christ; Or, without Christ's spirit one may still be his; Or, that the things which make it to be a Church, do not yet make it to be Christ's. The first of these would be absurd. For what more so, than to assert, That a bare profession of Christianity confers the Spirit of Christ? At this rate every Hypocrite is a partaker of that Holy Spirit. The second, That one without Christ's Spirit may still be his, directly contradicts Saint Paul's assertion, which positively declares, That he who hath not Christ's Spirit, is not his. And for the third, That the things which make it to be a Church,

a Church, do not yet make it to be Christ's; it may be *M. de Condom* may not like this himself. I for my part look upon it as a very strange position. For can one say, that what precisely constitutes the Church, does not make it Christ's? This is as much as to say, that the Church is not his Body, nor his Spouse, nor his well-beloved, nor any of all those things the Scripture calls it. In a word, 'tis to say, that it is not considered in this quality any part of his concern. If *M. de Condom* frame to himself such a Church as this, let him at least give us leave to enquire why he does afterwards appropriate the promises to it. For what right can the Church have to these, if, as such, it be not Christ's, nor hath Communion with him? These two Propositions are evidently destructive of one another. If the Church as such be not Christ's, it has no share in his promises; if it hath, then it is his, as a Church. Let him chuse which he please; if the first, our Controversie is at an end, for to what purpose should we dispute of a Church, which he says, is Jesus Christ's; and yet is not his, nor hath any title to the promises? If the second, let him not talk any more of a Church considered as such, being constituted by a bare outward profession: For this not conferring Christ's Spirit, cannot make the Church his; or if it can, St. Paul does not say true, when he tells us expressly, *That if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.*

IX. The sundry passages of Scripture concerning Hypocrites, who cloak themselves with such an outward profession, abundantly prove them not

- 1 Joh. 2.9. to be of Christ's Church. *He that saith, he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in darkness.* And a little after, *In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the Devil, whosoever doth not righteousness is not of God, neither be that loveth not his brother.* Again afterwards, *He that loveth not, knoweth not God, for God is love.* St. Jude speaking of these Hypocrites, calls them, *Spots in our feasts of charity, clouds without water, trees without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the Roots.* Jesus Christ himself says; *In the last day he will profess unto them, he never knew them.* What colour then have we for making such members of the Church, which is Christ's Body? But that place of St. John removes all the difficulty, *They went out from us, but they were not of us: for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us, but that they might be made manifest, that they were not all of us.* What a plain difference is here made between *being among us*, and *being of us*; being among us, is proper for Hypocrites, that are mixed with the Faithful, and joyn in the same profession: Being with us, is sincerely and truly to be of the Church; for which something more than an outward profession is requisite.

X. We read in Scripture of a twofold Call, one by the meer Preaching of the Word, commonly termed an outward Call; the other by the Preaching of the Word, and the Holy Spirit both, stiled an inward Call. Of the first our Saviour speaks, when he says, *Many are called, but few chosen.* Of the second St. Paul, *Whom he did predestinate, them he also called, and whom he called, them he also justified.* Now the Church, whose very name implies a Call, must needs have been the effect of one of these two just mentioned. But if defined by *a bare profession*, it cannot refer to one or other of these, nor can it answer the design of either. It does not fulfil the end of the first, for the Preaching of the Gospel does not call men to a meer Profession of believing Jesus Christ's Doctrine. A Hypocrite is so far from complying with this Call, that he rejects and mocks at it. It does not refer to the second Call, because the Spirit which calls with the Word, is a Spirit of Regeneration, and not bare profession. What Call shall we refer it to then? I know not any third, the Scripture mentions not any, and the nature of the thing will not admit of any. We can consider God in such a case but according to two different capacities, either as a Law-giver, commanding, exhorting, promising and threatening, or as an absolute disposer of Events, and so bringing to pass in us the thing he commands us.

But whether commanding us, or whether working in us, he never stops at a bare profession, he goes on to the truth of Holiness and Faith, his Word enjoyns it, his Spirit produces it. So that whether soever of these two Calls you suppose the Church to obey, it must either proceed to a true Conversion, or be no Church, for the proper and natural signification of the word is a *Called Society*, but no one ever called it to an outward profession, and no more.

XI. I suppose it is a maxim among all Christians, That Jesus Christ hath no more Churches than one, and that this on Earth, together with that in Heaven, make but that one; thus much we learn from the *Trent-Catechism* it self. A sure method then of discovering the true nature and essence of the Church upon Earth, would be to search into that in Heaven; for it is plain, were these of different natures, they would be no longer one, but two Churches of a several *species*. Thus much, I think, must be granted, and so likewise must the Conclusion I deduce from it, viz. That either the nature of the Church Triumphant, must exist in a bare profession, or that of the Church Militant cannot. If the Churches Unity here below, be a Unity of Profession, an external Unity only, and the internal one be but accidental, then the Unity of the Church above must be External too, and no more, and that Internal one resulting from the agreement of hearts and wills, no more essential to it, than to this below. Otherwise (as was said

before) they must be two different Churches. Let them be so kind then to clear this Point, Whether we must believe that a true Piety, true Regeneration, and true Holiness, are not really essential parts of the Church in Heaven, for to this hour I never heard any such thing maintained.

Joh. 17.  
20,21,22.

XII. Those who desire to be informed what the Church, and its Unity is, need only consider what Jesus Christ says in that admirable Prayer related by St. John, *Neither pray I for these alone (his Apostles) but for them also which shall believe on me through their word. That they may be one, as thou Father art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us. The Glory which thou gavest me, I have given them, that they may be one, even as we are one.* The Churches Unity is formed after the pattern of that between the Father and the Son. This is a kind of resemblance, a draught of that which hath some of the strokes, though not all the liveliness and perfection. It is therefore a Real, Internal Unity, a Unity not of outward Profession only, but in some sort of nature and essence, that is, of a Mystical nature and essence, a Unity of Regeneration, a Unity of the same Faith, and the same Righteousness; and to restrain this to a meer External Union, such as is common to both good and bad men, would not only weaken, but utterly evacuate the force of Jesus Christ's expression.

Joh. 6. 68,  
69.  
\* Petrus  
at, Domi-  
ne ad  
quem ibi-  
mus? ver-  
ba vitæ  
eternæ  
habes, &  
nos credi-  
mus &  
cognovi-  
mus, quo-  
niam tu es

*Significans scilicet & ostendens eos qui à Christo recesserint culpâ suâ perire. Ecclesiam tamen, quæ in Christum credat, & quæ semel id quod cognoverit teneat, nunquam ab eo omnino discedere, & eos esse Ecclesiam, qui in domo Dei permanent. Plantationem vero plantatam à Deo patre non esse, quos vidimus non frumenti stabilitate solidari, sed tanquam paleas dissipantis iniici Spiritu ventilari: De quibus & Joannes in Epistola suâ dicir, ex nobis exierunt, sed non fuerunt ex nobis, si enim fuissent ex nobis, mansissent utique nobiscum. Cyprian. Edit. Oxon. 1682.*

Where this is the 59th Epistle.

the

the wine did the Blood of Christ, he adds, † *When therefore the water is mixed with the wine in the Chalice, the people are united to Jesus Christ, and the company of believers joined to him on whom they believe. Now this water and wine are so mixt in the Cup, that they cannot be parted any more: Whence it follows, that nothing can separate between Christ and his Church; that is, the persons that are in the Church, constantly and closely adhering to what they have believed; nor break off the inviolable love they bear to one another.* So that wicked men and Hypocrites are not of the Body of the Church, seeing an outward profession is not sufficient to make men such.

† Quando autem in calice vi-  
no aqua misceretur,  
Christo populus aduna-  
tur, & credenti-  
um plebs

ei in quem credit copulatur & conjungitur. Quæ copulatio & conjunctio aquæ & vini sic miscetur in calice Domini, ut commixtio illa non possit ab invicem separari. Unde Ecclesiam, id est, plebem in Ecclesiâ constitutam fideliter & firmiter in eo quod credit perverantem nulla res separare poterit à Christo, quo minus haeret semper & maneat individua dilectio; *Cypr. Ep. 63. Pag. 154. Edit. Oxon.*

St. Jerom says the very same thing: \* *The Church of Christ is a glorious Church, having neither spot nor wrinkle, nor any such thing. He therefore that is a sinner, and stained with any pollution, cannot be said to be of Christ's Church, nor in subjection to Christ. It may happen indeed, that as the Church which had before its spots and wrinkles, was after restored to youth and purity; so a sinner may come to the Physician, for those that be well, need not a Physician, but those that be sick, and so having his maladies healed, be made a member of the Church, which is Christ's Body.*

\* Ecclesia  
Christi  
gloriosa  
est, non  
habens  
maculam,  
neque ru-  
gam, aut  
quidistis-  
modi. Qui

ergo peccator est, & aliqua forde maculatus, de Ecclesia Christi non potest appellari; nec Christo subiectus dici. Possibile autem est, ut quomodo Ecclesia, quæ prius rugam haberat, & maculam, in juventutem & munditiam postea restituta est, ita & peccator currat ad Medicum, quia non habent opus sanii Medico, sed male habentes, & curentr vulnera ipsius, & fiat de Ecclesia, quæ corpus est Christi. *Hieronym. in Epbes. 5. Tom. 9. Edit. Basil. 1537.*

St. Ambrose explaining those words of the 36th Psalm, *Let not the hand of the ungodly cast me down;* † says, \* *As the Saints are members of Jesus Christ, so wicked men are members of the Devil. Let not the hand of the ungodly remove me; that is, Let not the actions of Sinners tempt me to depart from the way of righteousness, for we are apt to slip when we see the prosperity of Sinners, and so the hand of Sinners does in some sort shake and loosen us from the root of virtue. If wicked men are members of the Devil, there is little probability that hypocrisy should be able to make them members of Jesus Christ.*

\* Et ma-  
nus pecca-  
torum  
non mo-  
veat me.  
Etenim  
sicut san-  
cti mem-  
bra sunt  
Christi,  
ita impie  
membra

sunt Diaboli. Manus peccatorum non moveat me; id est, Actus eorum qui peccant non me de justitiae statione dimoveant. Pierumque enim dum videmus peccatores prosperis abundare successibus, mutamus affectum & quasi quâdam peccatorum manu de radice virtutis avellimur. *Ambros. in Psal. 35. Edit. Paris. 1529.*

But of all the Fathers, there is not any that treats of this Subject with such exactness and perspicuity, as St. Austin does; a Man might compile a whole Volume of what he hath written about it. This Father explaining that of St. John, *They went out from us, but they were not of us.*

\* *They went out from us, (says he) we lament the loss: But bear the comfort, they were not of us. All Hereticks and Schismaticks go out from us; That is, depart from the Church; but were they truly any of ours, they would not have departed. They were not therefore ours members even before they went out, and if so, then there are many within, who, tho they have not yet gone out, are Antichrists. May we dare to assert this? Yes, why not? Let every man consult his own Conscience, to know if he be not Antichrist. The meaning of Antichrist is, contrary to Christ. Whence it is clear, that none but Antichrists can go out; for such as are not contrary to Christ, will by no means do so, for they continue in the body, and are reckoned among the members of Christ. The Members are never contrary to one another; The intire composition of a body consists in having all its members; and you know what the Apostle says upon this mutual agreement of the Members, If one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; and if one be honoured, all shall rejoice with it. Now if all the Members suffer in the grief of one, and rejoice at the honour done to one, there is nothing that favours of Antichrist in this mutual agreement. Those*

non exirent si ex nobis essent, antequam exirent ergo non erant ex nobis. Si antequam exirent non erant ex nobis, multi intus sunt, non exierunt, & tamen Antichristi sunt. Audemus hoc dicere? ut quid? Nisi unusquisque cum intus est non sit Antichristus. — Nunc interrogare debet unusquisque conscientiam suam, an sit Antichristus. Latine enim Antichristus contrarius est Christo — Eos autem qui non sunt Christo contrarii, foras exire nullo modo posse, qui enim non est Christo contrarius in corpore ipsius haeret, & membrum computatur. Nunquam sibi sunt membra contraria, corporis integritas universis membris constat; & quid de concordia dicit Apostolus? Si patitur unum membrum, compatiuntur omnia membra, & si glorificatur unum membrum, congaudent omnia membra. Si ergo in glorificatione membra cætera membra congaudent, & in passione omnia membra patiuntur, concordia membrorum non habet Antichristum. Et qui sunt intus, certe sunt in corpore Domini nostri Iesu Christi, quandoquidem adhuc curatur corpus ipsius, & sanitas perfecta non erit, nisi in resurrectione mortuorum. Sic sunt in corpore Christi, quomodo humores mali, quando evoluntur, tunc relevatur corpus, sic & mali quando exent, tunc Ecclesia relevatur; & dicit, quando eos evomit, atq; projicit corpus, ex me exierunt humores isti, sed non erant ex me. Quid est, non erant ex me? Non de carne mea præcisi sunt, sed pectus mihi premebant, cum inessent. Ex nobis exierunt, sed nolite tristes esse, non erant ex nobis. Unde probas? Quod si fuissent ex nobis, permanissent utique nobiscum. Hinc ergo videat Charitas vestra, quia multi, qui non sunt ex nobis, accipiunt nobiscum Sacraenta. Accipiunt nobiscum Baptismum, accipiunt nobiscum, quod novunt fideles se accipere, Benedictionem, Eucharistiam, & quicquid in Sacramentis sanctis est. Ipsius altaris communicationem accipiunt nobiscum, & non sunt ex nobis. Tentatio probat, quia non sunt ex nobis. Quando illis tentatio venerit, velut occasione venti volant foras, quia grana non erant. *Augustin. Tom. 9. Tractat. 3. in Epist. Joannis. Edit. Paris. 1531.*

that are within, are the body of our Lord Jesus Christ. For this body is still in a state of healing, and will never enjoy perfect health and soundness, till the resurrection of the dead. These Antichrists are in the body of Christ like ill humours, the voiding of which eases the body: Thus when the wicked go out, the Church finds refreshment; and when the body throws them out, she says, these noxious humours are gone out of me, but they were no part of me; that is, they were not cut away from my flesh or substance, but opprest my stomach while they lay there. They are gone from us then, but be not troubled at it, they were not ours. But how do you prove this? St. John says, If they had been of us, they would have continued with us. So that you see, many people receive the Sacraments with us, which yet are not any part of us; They have Baptism administered to them, they receive that benediction which the faithful are sensible they receive truly and effectually, the Eucharist, and whatever is in the Sacraments. They communicate of the same Altar with us, and yet are no parts of us. Temptation discovers them to be none. When that arises, they are carried away, as with a strong wind, because they are not the true solid Corn. Nothing can be more express. Evil men, tho within the pale of the Church; That is, making an outward profession, yet are not of his Body, nor ought to be reckoned among his Members. These are distempered humours within the Body, but not at all of the substance of the Body, such as do but annoy the Body, and must be evacuated in order to give its relief. So that St. Augustine's sense of the Church was, That it consisted only of Righteous persons, and true Believers, and that inward virtues were essential to it, and ought to make a part of its definition.

Observe again what he delivers in his Treatise of Baptism, against the *Donatists*. <sup>†</sup> "Whether evil men be seemingly within the Church, or evidently out of it, still that which is flesh is flesh. Whether the barren Chaff continue in the floor, or be scattered by the blast of temptation, it is still but Chaff. Carnal and obdurate persons, tho they mix with the Saints in the same Assemblies, are still separated from the Unity of that Church which is without spot or wrinkle. Yet must we not despair of any, either such as being within the pale passes for Friends, or such as being without, betrays a more manifest contrariety to us.

<sup>†</sup> Aug. de  
Bapt. contra  
Donat.  
Lib. 1.  
Cap. 17.  
‡ Itaq. five  
intus ver-  
sari vide-  
antur five  
aperte fo-  
ris sint,  
quod caro

est, caro est, five in area sua sterilitate perseveret, five occasione tentationis tanquam vento, extra tollatur, quod palea est, palea est: & semper ab illius Ecclesiæ, quæ sine macula & ruga est, unitate divisus est; etiam qui congregatione sanctorum in carnali obduracione miscetur. De nullo tamen desperandum est, five qui intus talis appetet, five qui foris manifestius adversatur.

And

. Baptif-  
mus cor-  
rumpi &  
adulterari  
non po-  
test, et si à  
corruptis  
& adul-  
teris ha-  
beatur, si-  
cut & ip-  
sa Eccle-  
sia incor-  
rupta, &  
casta, &  
pudica  
est, & i-  
diò ad e-  
am non  
pertinent  
avari, rap-  
tores, fe-  
neratores,  
quos non  
tantum  
foris, sed  
etiam in-  
tus esse,  
multis literarum suarum locis *Cyprianus* ipse testatur.

Aug. de Bapt. contra Donatist. Lib. 4. Cap. 2.

\* Nec isti Ecclesiae devoti sunt, qui videntur esse intus, & contra Christum vivunt, id est, contra Christi mandata faciunt; nec omnino ad illam Ecclesiam pertinere iudicandi sunt, quam sic ipse mundat lavacro aquæ in verbo, ut exhibeat sibi gloriosam Ecclesiam, non habentem maculam, aut rugam, aut aliquid hujusmodi: Quod si in istâ Ecclesîa non sunt, ad cuius membra non pertinent, non sunt in Ecclesîa, de quâ dicitur, una est columba, una est matri suæ, ipsa est enim sine maculâ & rugâ; aut afferat qui potest, hujus columbae membra esse, qui seculo verbis non factis renunciant. Ibid. Cap. 3.

Ille Nos autem, secundum id quod in praesenti est cuic; hominum, quærimus, utrum in illius Ecclesiae membris, quæ una columba dicta est, & sponsa Christi sine maculâ & rugâ, hodie depurandi sunt, de quibus dicit *Cyprianus* in Epistola sua quam commemoravi: quod non viam Domini non tenerent, nec data sibi ad salutem coelestia mandata reservarent, quod non facerent Domini voluntatem, patrimoniorum lucro studentes, superbiam sectantes, æmulationi & dissensioni vacantes, simplicitatis & fidei negligentes, seculo folis verbis & non factis renunciantes, unusquisque sibi placentes, & omnibus displicentes. Quod si eos in suis membris nec illa columba cognoscit, & talibus, si in eadem perversitate permanerint, dicitur est Deus, Non novi vos, discedite à me qui operamini iniquitatem, videntur esse in Ecclesîa, sed non sunt, imò & contra Ecclesiam faciunt. Ibid.

“ not

And lower in the same Treatise, ∵ “ Baptism it self cannot be corrupted, “ tho the administered to corrupt persons; any more than the Church, which “ is incorruptible, chaste and innocent. To which Covetous persons, “ Robbers, and Usurers do not belong; such as *Cyprian* in many of his “ Epistles says, are not only without, but even within the pale. Presently after, \* “ Such as live contrary to Christ, that is, in the breach “ of his Commandments, tho they seem to be in the Church, are not “ really so. We must not imagine they belong to that Church, which “ Jesus Christ cleanses by the washing of water, and the word, to make of it a “ glorious Church, without spot or wrinkle. And if they be not of that Church, “ whose members they are not, then neither are they of that, concerning “ which it is said, *My dove is but one, the only one of her mother*. For this “ is she that is without spot or wrinkle; and let them shew us how these “ are members of this Dove, who have renounced the World, in words “ only, and not in works. And a little after that, || I would ask with “ respect to every man's present condition, whether such men are now to “ be reckoned for members of that Church, which is the Dove, the Spouse “ without spot or wrinkle, as *Cyprian* describes in his Epistle. Men that kept “ not to the way of the Lord, nor the Heavenly precepts given for their “ Salvation, that did not perform the Will of God, but wholly addicted “ themselves to worldly gain; proud, envious, contentious persons, that “ neglected Honesty and Faith, renounced the World in words only,

“ not in deeds; every one studying his own pleasure, and the dissatisfaction of all others. If this Dove refuse to own such for her Members; “ if God shall one day say to such wretches, that continue in their perverse courses, *I know you not, depart from me ye workers of iniquity*; tho they seem never so much to be in the Church, they are not in truth of the Church, but act in direct contrariety to her. And in another place of the same Treatise; † “ Such as oppose brotherly love, whether they are plainly without, or whether seemingly within, are divided from that invisible Assembly which Charity knits together. Therefore St. John says, *They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us.* He does not say they alienated themselves by going out, but that they were aliens, and that this was the reason why they went out. Thus far this Father does not dissemble his opinion; He will by no means own any but the Saints to be Members of the Church, he totally excludes wicked men and hypocrites; he uses no such nice distinctions between dead and living members, as our modern Controvertists do; in the contrary, he explains what he said, That wicked men were in the Church, by saying, that they seem to be in it; but they only seem to be so, for in very deed they are mere foreigners, and such as the Church does not acknowledg for hers.

† Etiam si  
discendendi  
occasiones  
ipsis de-  
sint, quum  
intus vi-  
denter, ab  
illâ invisi-  
bili chari-  
tatis com-  
page sepa-  
rati sunt;  
unde *Ioan-*  
*nes* dicit,  
ex nobis  
exierunt,  
sed non  
erant ex

nobis, nam si fuissent ex nobis mansissent utique nobiscum. Non ait quod exeundo alieni facti sunt, sed quod alieni erant, propter hoc eos exiisse declaravit. Aug. de Bapt. contra Donatist. Lib. 3. Cap. 19.

In the fifth Book of the same Treatise, he says, \* “ The Church is described in the Book of *Canticles*, as *Christ's Garden inclosed, his Sister, his Spouse, his sealed Fountain, his Well of living waters, his Orchard of*

\* In Can-  
tico Canti-  
corum Ec-  
clesia sic  
describi-

tur, *Hortus conclusus, foror, mea sponsa, fons signatus, puteus aquæ vivæ, paradisi cum fructu pomorum.* Hoc intelligere non audeo nisi in sanctis & justis, non in avaris, & fraudatoribus, & raptoribus, & fœnatoribus; & ebrios, & invidis, quos tamen cum justis baptismum habuisse communem, cum quibus communem non habebant utiq; charitatem — docemus. Nam dicat mihi aliquis, quomodo irrepenter in hortum conclusum, & fontem signatum, quos sæculo solis verbis, & non factis renunciâsse Cyprianus, & tamen intus quisile restatur. Si enim intus sunt, & ipsi sponsa Christi sunt, itane vero talis est illa sine macula & rugâ, & illa speciosa columba talis membrorum parte turpatur? An ita sunt spinæ in quarum medio est illa sicut lilyum, quod in eodem Cantico dicitur? In quantum ergo lilyum, in tantum & hortus conclusus, & fons signatus, in illis videlicet justis, qui in occulto Iudæi sunt circumcisione cordis: Omnis enim pulchritudo filiæ regum intrinsecus, in quibus est numerus certus Sanctorum, prædestinatus ante mundi constitutionem. Illa verò multitudo spinarum, five occultis, five apertis separationibus, fornicatus adiacet super numerum. Annunciasi inquit & locutus sum, multiplicati sunt super numerum. Numerus ergo ille Justorum, qui secundum propositum vocati sunt, de quibus dictum est, Novit Dominus qui sunt ejus, ipse est hortus conclusus, fons signatus, puteus aquæ vivæ, paradisi cum fructu pomorum. Aug. de Bapt. contra Donatist. Lib. 5. Cap. 27.

" *Pomegranates.* This I dare understand of none but the Saints and Righteous persons; not of the Covetous, the Defrauders, the Extortioners, the Usurers, the Drunkards, and the Envious, which have indeed the same common Baptism with the just; but not the same Charity. Let them tell me how the men that have renounced the world in words only, and not in deeds, got in to this inclosed Garden, this sealed Fountain: For if these men are really in it, if these are the Spouse of Christ, how can that Spouse be without blemish or without spot? How can she be the beautiful Dove, when stained with such a parcel of Members as these? Are not these the Thorns in the midst of which she as the Lilies, according to that expression in the *Canticles*? In what respect then  
 Cant. 2. 2. she is a *Lily*, in the same is she the *an inclosed Garden, a sealed Fountain*;  
 Rom. 2. 29. That is, with regard to those just men, who are *Jews* inwardly, by the  
 Pt. 45. 13. *Circumcision of the heart*. For the King's daughter is all glorious within, and among these are the set number of Saints predestinated before the foundation of the World: But for that multitude of Thorns, whether their separation be undiscerned, or whether it be open, they are added over and above, as the Scripture says, *they are multiplied above measure*. This number therefore of the just, called according to the *Election of God*, these  
 2 Tim. 2. 19. of whom it is said, *The Lord knoweth them that be his*, They are his inclosed Garden, his sealed Fountain, his Well of Living Waters. This Holy Doctor thought it not enough to allow wicked men and hypocrites no place in his notion of the Church, and to make it up of just men only, but he does besides shew wherein the very essential form, that Unity which constitutes a Church, does consist; to wit, not in any thing external, but in the internal graces. *In the Circumcision of the heart, and the Glory within*: He goes farther still, and makes the Church to consist of the pre-destinated only, "The number, says he, of God's Elect, are his inclosed Garden, and sealed Fountain, that is, the Church of Christ. How shall we reconcile this Doctrine with *M. de Condom's*, who distinguishes between the Church of Christ, and the predestinate, as between a whole and it's part; who counts the reprobates in too, and blames us for restraining the Church to the number of God's Elect alone?

This being a point of consequence, and able to determine all our Controversy concerning the Church, I hope it may not be tedious to hear what St. *Augustin* says further upon it. After having recited a passage taken out of St. *Cyprian's* Epistle to *Magnus*, he goes on thus. + "The words of blessed *Cyprian* shew, that he rightly understood the beauty of

+ Hæc  
 verba be-  
 ati Cypri-  
 ani indi-  
 cant eum etiam intellenisse decorum domus Dei, quam domum ex unanimis & concordibus con-  
 stare affirmavit, & docuit testimonio Prophetarum, & significatione Sacramentorum. In quâ  
 utique domo non erant illi invidi, & sine charitate malevoli, qui tamen baptizabant. Ex quo ap-  
 paret

paret & in eis esse posse, atq; ab eis dari posse Sacramentum Christi, qui non sunt in Ecclesia Christi, in qua non nisi unanimes & concordes habitare Cyprianus ipse testatur. Neq; enim hoc saltem dici potest, tunc baptisare posse cum latent, quoniam illi Paulum Apostolum non latebant, quos in Epistola sua veracissimum testis notat, & gaudere se dicit, quoniam & ipsi Christum annunciatabant. De his quippe ait, five occasione, five veritate Christus annunciat, & in hoc gaudeo, sed & gaudabo. Quibus omnibus consideratis, puto me non temere dicere, alios ita esse in domo Dei, ut ipsi etiam sint eadem domus Dei, quæ dicitur ædificari super petram, quæ unica columba appellatur, quæ sponsa pulchra sine macula & ruga, & hortus conclusus, fons signatus, puteus aquæ vivæ, paradisus cum fructu pomorum. Quæ domus etiam claves accepit, & potestatem solvendi & ligandi: Hanc domum si quis corripietem contempserit corrigentemque, sit tibi, inquit, tanquam Ethnicus & publicanus. De hac domo dicitur, Dilexi, Domine, decorem domus tuæ, & locum habitationis gloriae tuæ. Et qui habitare facit unanimes in domo. Et jocundatus sum in his quæ dixerunt mihi in domum Domini ibi filius. Et, beati qui habitant in domo tua, Domine, in sæculo sæculorum laudabunt te; & innumerabilia talia. Hæc domus etiam triticum dicitur, five tricenum, five sexagenum, five centenum fructum afferens cum tollerantia. Hæc domus est in vasis aureis, & argenteis, & lapidibus pretiosis, & lignis impetrabilibus. Huic domui dicitur, suffertes invicem in dilectione, studentes servare unitatem Spiritus in vinculo pacis. Et, templum enim sanctum Dei estis vos. Hæc quippe in bonis fidelibus est, & Sanctis Dei servis ubiq; dispersis, & Spirituali unitate devinctis, eadem communione Sacramentorum, five se facie noverint, five non noverint. Alios autem ita dici constat esse in domo, ut non pertineant ad compagnum domus, nec ad societatem fructiferæ pacificæ, Justitiae. Sed sicut palea esse dicitur in frumento, Paulo Apostolo dicente, in magna autem domo non solum aurea vasa sunt, vel argentea, sed & lignea, & fictilia, & alia quidem sunt in honorem, alia vero ad contumeliam. Aug. de Bapt. contra Donatist. Lib 7. Cap. 50.

“ God’s House, in that he declares, and proves both by the testimony of the  
 “ Prophets, and the signification of the Sacraments, that this House is  
 “ composed of men living in Peace, and unity of Heart. So that those en-  
 “ vious uncharitable Wretches were not in this House, notwithstanding  
 “ they were baptised. And by consequence Christ’s Holy Sacrament may be  
 “ both administered, and received by men not in the Church of Christ; be-  
 “ cause, as appears by the Testimony of Cyprian, none but the peaceable  
 “ live in this Church. It will not serve the turn to say, they might bap-  
 “ tize while they were hid; they were not hidden from St. Paul, when he  
 “ said in his Epistle, he rejoiced, *that Christ was preached even by such*; whe-  
 “ ther in pretence or in truth (says he) *Christ is preached, and I therein do*  
 “ *rejoice, yea, and will rejoice.* “ Upon these considerations I do not think it  
 “ rashness in me to affirm, that some are in the House of God, so, as that  
 “ they are themselves the very House, that which is said to be built upon a  
 Rock, called, *his Dove, his only One, his beautiful Spouse, without spot or*  
 “ *wrinkle, the inclosed Garden, the sealed Fountain, the Well of living Water, the*  
 “ *Orchard with Pomegranates, and which hath received the Keys, the power of*  
 “ *binding and loosing;* “ this House it is, whose corrections if any man con-  
 “ temptuously behave himself agaist, he is ordered to be to us, *is an*  
 “ *Heathen and a Publican.* “ Of this it is said, *Lord I have loved the Beauty of*  
 “ *thy House, and the place where thine Honour dwelleth. He maketh men of one*  
 “ *mind*

Phil. 1.18.

Mat. 16.18.

Matt. 16.

19.

Mat. 18.17.

Pf. 26.8.

Pf. 68.6.

Ps. 122. 1. *mind in an house. I was glad when they said unto me, we will go into the House*  
 Psal. 84. 4. *of the Lord. Blessed are they that dwell in thy House, they will be always praising*  
 Matt. 13. *Thee; and a world of such like passages. This House is called the good*  
 23. *seed, bringing forth fruit with patience, thirty, sixty, and a hundred fold.*  
 Luk. 8. 15. *This House consists of Vessels of gold and of silver, of precious stones, and*  
 2 Tim. 2. *incorruptible wood. To this House 'tis said, Bear up one another in love,*  
 20. *endeavouring to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace. And, the Holy*  
 Ephes. 4. *Temple of God are ye. For this consists of the true Believers, and holy*  
 2, 3. *Servants of God dispersed throughout the Universe, and all knit to-*  
 17. *gether in a spiritual Unity, by the participation of the same Sacraments,*  
*whether personally known to one another, or not. As for the rest,*  
*they are said to be in the House, but it is in such a manner, that they*  
*belong not at all to the building, nor have any part of that fellowship*  
*which brings forth the fruit of righteousness and peace. They are here*  
*as the Chaff is among the Corn; for we cannot deny that they be con-*  
 2 Tim. 2. *tained in the House, because St. Paul says, In a great house are vessels, not*  
 20. *only of gold and silver, but also of wood and of earth, and some to honour, and*  
*some to dishonour.*

Confer-  
ence page  
5, 7, 8, 9.

I cannot imagine how St. *Augustin's* fight came to differ so mightily from *M. de Condom's*. If we believe the latter, by the Church must be understood, a Society composed of good and bad men; for he tells you, to such a Society only are those passages of Scripture applicable. *Upon this rock will I build my Church. Christ loved the Church, and gave himself for it, that he might make it a glorious Church without spot or wrinkle, &c. If he refuse to bear the Church, let him be unto thee as an Heathen, &c. Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth, shall be bound in Heaven, &c.* But if St. *Augustin* be to be believed, we must take the Church in a quite different sense; for a Society made up of none but righteous persons, and true Believers; because to such a one, and no other, do these passages belong. In his Opinion the just alone are the House built upon a Rock, the Spouse without spot or wrinkle, they only have the keys and power of binding and loosing, 'tis their censures only that men ought not to despise, if they would not be looked upon as Heathens and Publicans. *M. de Condom* deduces his Arguments from these passages; St. *Augustin* deduces his from the very same, and yet their Conclusions are opposite to one another: All that we have left to do then, is either to correct St. *Augustin* by *M. de Condom*, or *M. de Condom* by St. *Augustin*, and of the two, methinks the latter is the more reasonable.

Upon this ground then I will once more introduce that Father speaking <sup>†</sup> Necidet thus: <sup>†</sup> *We must not suppose that wicked men belong to Christ's body, putandi sunt esse in corpore Christi, quod est Ecclesia, quia sacramentorum eius corporaliter participes sunt. Illa enim & in talibus sancta sunt, & eis indignè tractantibus & fumentibus ad majus iudicium*

dicium valebunt. Ipsi autem non sunt in illâ Ecclesiâ Christi compage quæ in membris Christi per connexum & contactum crescit in incrementum Dei. Illa quippe Ecclesia in petrâ est, sicut Dominus dicit, super hanc petram ædificabo Ecclesiam meam. Illi autem in arenâ ædificant, sicut idem Dominus dicit, Qui audit verba mea, & non facit ea, assimilabo eum viro stulto, qui ædificat domum suam super arenam. Sed ne putes Ecclesiam quæ in petrâ est, in unâ parte esse terrarum, & non diffundi usq; ad fines terræ, audi ejus vocem de Psalmo gementis, inter mala peregrinationis suæ. Ait enim, A finibus terræ ad te clamavi, dum angeretur cor meum. In petrâ exaltâsti me. Videte quemadmodum à finibus terræ clamat. Non est ergo in sola Africâ. — Videte quemadmodum in petrâ exaltetur, Non ergo in eâ deputandi sunt omnes qui ædificant in arenâ. Aug. contra Literas Petilian. Lib. 2. Cap. 108.

“ i. e. the Church; because they do partake of the Sacraments corporally.

“ The Sacraments themselves are holy in such persons, but they do but  
 “ increase their condemnation, because they administer and receive them  
 “ unworthily. Now they are not of that Company of Christ's Church,  
 “ which consists of his Members compacted together by bands and joyns, and  
 “ increaseth with the increase of God. For this Church is built on a Rock,  
 “ according to that of our Saviour, *Upon this rock will I build my Church*:  
 “ But those build on the Sand, as the same Saviour said, *Whoso heareth  
 “ my Words, and doth them not, I will compare him to a foolish man, that built  
 “ his house upon the sand*. Now lest you should fancy that the Church  
 “ built upon a Rock, is in any one particular place; or that it is not ex-  
 “ tended over the whole Earth, observe her complaint in the Psalm, *From  
 “ the ends of the Earth have I cried unto thee, when my heart was in heaviness,  
 “ Thou hast set me up upon a rock*. She cries from the ends of the Earth, there-  
 “ fore she is not in Africa and no where else; she is set up upon a Rock,  
 “ therefore those must not be esteemed of her, who build upon the Sand.  
 There is some probability St. *Augustin* knew what he said, and yet you see  
 a passage of Scripture, *Ephes. 4.* abused by *M. de Condom*, in favour of his  
 Church, made up of a mixture of good and bad men, which this Father  
 explains of the Church of the Just only, as well as that other of St. *Matt.*

**16. Upon this Rock will I build my Church.**

He teaches the same Doctrine in his Book concerning the Unity of the Church. || “ The Church is the Body of Jesus Christ, according to that  
 “ of the Apostle, *for His body the Church*; whence it is evident, that such  
 “ as are not accounted his Members, cannot obtain Salvation. Now the  
 “ Members of Jesus Christ are united by Love, both to one another,  
 “ and to him their Head. A little further, answering the *Donatists* Cavils  
 against the Catholicks, for having persecuted them, for having burnt their

Ephes. 4.  
 16.  
 Col. 2.19.  
 Matt. 16.  
 16.  
 Matt. 7.27.

Pf. 61.2,3.

Ephes. 3.  
 || Hæc au-  
 tem Ec-  
 clesia cor-  
 pus Chri-  
 sti est, si-  
 cut Apo-

stulus dicit, *Pro corpore ejus, quæ est Ecclesia*. Unde utiq; manifestum est; eum qui non est in  
 membris Christi, Christianam salutem habere non posse. Membra vero Christi per unitatis charita-  
 tem sibi copulantur, & per eandem capitî suo cohaerent. August. de Unitat. Ecclef. Cap. 2.

† Breviter respondere quod sepe respondi, aut falsa dicitis, aut si vera sunt, non ad frumenta Christi, sed ad eorum paleam pertinent ista quae dicitis. Non inde perit Ecclesia, quae optimo iudicio ventilata istorum omnium separatio ne purgabitur. Ego ipsam Ecclesiam require ubi sit, quae audi endo verba Christi, & ea faciendo, ædificat super petram, & audiendo, & faciendo tolerat eos, qui audiendo, & non faciendo, ædificant super arenam. Ubi sit triticum, quod inter zizania crescit usq; ad messem, non quid fecerint vel faciant zizania. Ubi sit proxima Christi in medio filiarum malarum, sicut lumen in medio spinarum, non quid fecerint vel faciant ipsæ spinæ: Ubi sunt pices boni, qui donec ad littus perveniant, tolerant pices malos pariter irretitos, non quid fecerint vel faciant ipsi pices mali. Ibid. Cap. 16.

¶ Cum igitur boni & mali dent & accipiant Sacramentum baptismi, nec regenerentur spiritualiter, in corpus & membra Christi non coædificant nisi boni, profecto in bonis est illa Ecclesia, cui dicitur, sicut lumen in medio spinarum, ita proxima mea in medio filiarum. In his est enim qui ædificant super petram, id est, qui audiunt verba Christi, & faciunt; quia & Petro confitenti se Christum filium Dei sic ait, & super hanc Petram ædificabo Ecclesiam meam. Non est ergo in eis qui ædificant super arenam, id est, qui audiunt verba Christi, & non faciunt. Ipse enim dixit, Qui audit verba mea, & facit ea, similabo eum viro sapienti, qui ædificat domum suam super petram. Ibid. Cap. 18.

" that

"that beareth my words, and doth them, I will liken him to a wise man, that built his house upon a rock. And a little before the end of the Book, \* There are many who communicate with the Church in the Sacraments, yet are not in the Church. Else if when one is excommunicated visibly, he be then only separated from the Church, when he is restored to the Communion, we must say, that he is actually stated in the Church again. But suppose his return be hypocritical, That he bring a heart inveterate against the Truth, and the Church; must we own that such a one is perfectly reconciled, and become a true member of Jesus Christ, because the outward formalities of receiving him in, have past upon him? God forbid. As therefore he is not really of the Church, tho readmitted into the Communion; so if before Excommunication, he had a Soul at enmity with the Truth, he was in truth separated even then. And thus it is, that the good and bad seed grow together in the same common Field until Harvest, that is, the Children of the Kingdom, and the Children of the wicked one. If after all this, *M. de Condom* shall still maintain that an outward profession and participation of the Sacraments are sufficient to make men members of the Church; we may take the confidence to tell him, that his Authority is not yet advanced so far with us, as to be reckon'd of equal weight with St. Augustin's.

\* Multitatis sunt in sacramentorum communione cum Ecclesiâ, & tamennon jam sunt in Ecclesiâ: Alioquin, si tunc quisquam praedicitur, cum visibiliter excommunicatur, consequens erit, ut tunc rur-

sus inferatur, cum visibiliter communioni restituitur. Quid si ergo fictus accedat, atq; adversus veritatem & Ecclesiâ animum inimicissimum gerat, quamvis peragatur in eo illa solennitas, nunquid reconciliatur? nunquid inferitur? Abit. Sicut ergo jam denuo communicans nondum insertus est, sic & antequam visibiliter excommunicatur, quisquis contra veritatem quâ convincitur, & arguitur, inimicum gestat animum, jam praecisus est. Ita sit, ut & semen bonum, & semen malum utraq; per agrum crescant, usq; ad messem; id est, & filii regni, & filii maligni. Ibid. sub finem lib.

In his Book against *Cresconius*, \* Good and bad men (he says) may baptize, but God alone who is eternally good can purifie the conscience. The wicked are condemned of Christ without the Churches knowledge, as having an evil and a polluted conscience, and are not even now in Christ's body the Church. For Christ cannot have such for his members as are condemned; and therefore they Baptize even while they are out of the Church themselves. God forbid such monsters should be reckoned among the members of the only Dove: God forbid such should enter into the inclosed garden, whose keeper can never be imposed upon.

\* Tingere ergo possunt boni & mali, abluere autem conscientiam non nisi ille qui semper est bonus. Ac

per hoc etiam nesciente Ecclesiâ propter malam pollutamq; conscientiam damnati à Christo, iam in corpore Christi non sunt, quod est Ecclesiâ; quoniam non potest Christus habere membra damnata, proinde & ipsis extra Ecclesiâ baptizant. Omnia quippe ita monstrâ absit omnino ut in membris illius columbæ unicæ computentur. Absit ut intrare possint limites horti conclusi, cuius ille custos est, qui non potest falli. Aug. contra Cresconium, Lib. 2. Cap. 21.

In like manner does this holy Father speak in his Book of the Christian Doctrine. *Tichonius* the *Donatist* having buried himself in laying down some Rules for the understanding of Scripture, St. *Augustine* takes them into examination, and this is what he says to the second of them: † *His second Rule concerns the twofold Body of Christ, that is an improper term, for in reality none are his body, who shall not continue with him for ever. He should rather have expressit concerning our Lords true or mixt body, or true and counterfeit, or some such like term. For though hypocrites seem to be of the Church, they are so far from being with him to all eternity, that they are really not with him now. He might then be allowed to lay down this Rule, but he should have phrased it concerning the mixt Church.*

† *Secunda est de Domini corpore bipartito, quod quidem non ita debuit appellari. Non enim revera Do-*

*mini corpus est, quod cum illo non erit in aeternum. Sed dicendum fuit de Domini corpore vero atq; permixto, aut vero atq; simulato, aut quid aliud. Quia non solum in aeternum, verum etiam nunc hypocritæ non cum illo esse dicendi sunt, quamvis in ejus esse videantur Ecclesiæ. Unde poterat ista regula & sic appellari, ut diceretur de permixta Ecclesiæ. Aug. de Doctr. Christ. L. 3. Cap. 32.*

\* *Septima Ticonii regula est, eademque postrema, de Diabolo & ejus corpore. Est enim & ipse caput impiorum, qui sunt ejus*

\* *And afterwards, \* Tichonius his seventh and last Rule is concerning the Devil and his body. For the Devil is the head of the wicked, and they in some sort his members, appointed to undergo with him the punishment of everlasting fire; as Christ is the head of the Church, which is his body, and appointed to eternal glory with him. As therefore in the first Rule, entitled, Of the Lord and his body, when the Scripture speaks of one and the same person, we must distinguish carefully, what belongs to the Head, and what to the Body; so as to this last Rule, we shall find things spoken of the Devil, which do not so much belong to Him and his Body. Now that Body of his is composed not only of such as are visibly without, but those also who though in truth they belong to him, yet continue for a time mixed with the Church.*

*quodammodo corpus, ituri cum illo in supplicium aeterni ignis; sicut Christus caput est Ecclesiæ, quæ est corpus ejus, futurum cum illo in regno & gloria sempiterna. Sicut ergo in prima regula, quam vocat de Domino & ejus corpore, vigilandum est ut intelligatur, cum de una eademque persona Scriptura loquitur, quid conveniat capiti, quid corporis sic & in ista novissima aliquando in diabolum dicitur, quod non in ipso, sed potius in ejus corpore possit agnosciri, quod habet non solum in eis, qui manifestissime foris sunt, sed in eis etiam, qui cum ad ipsum pertineant, tamen ad tempus miscentur Ecclesiæ. Ibid. Cap. 37.*

I make no doubt but so many passages of St. *Augustine*, together with those other proofs I instanced in before, for the revolving this question, may make *M. de Condom* a little uneasy, though he think never so well of his own principle. But in short, it concerns not only this Bishop, but all others that take this dispute into consideration, to know once for all, what mighty difficulties they must overcome, before they can establish the pretended Authority of their Church. That is to say in one word, it is fit they

they know that in order to compass this design, they must triumph over Scripture, triumph over Reason, triumph over the Fathers, but above all they must declare open war with St. Austin particularly. The Throne of Rome's Hierarchy is never capable of being set up, but upon these foundations, or to speak more properly, upon these ruins.

Qu. 3. *Whether the Church upon Earth be visible, or invisible, or whether both together, considered in a different sense, and under different respects.*

Thus much I think, Sir, may suffice to give a resolution of the second question, which was, whether the Bishop of Condom's definition of the Church upon Earth was a good and sufficient definition, *viz. A Society making profession to believe the Doctrine of Jesus Christ, and govern it self by his word;* or whether it was defective, and required something else to be added to it. You see the necessity of handling this subject with some exactness; for it being our busyness to know what Society we must be of, to obtain Salvation, and both sides agreeing that it is the true Church; being it concerns us to know to what Society the Promises of Jesus Christ are to be applied, and both sides agreeing that it is the true Church: The first thing in reason to be done, is to form an abstracted Idea of the true Church, before it be applied to any particular subject, that so this may serve for a Rule, and direct us to know at least what that true Church is, which we enquire after. We know in general that there is one true Church; we know also, that this Church is a Religious Society; but when we come to define it particularly, every one knows his own method of doing it. This therefore is the first thing to be determined, not only to avoid equivocation, but to prevent a continual deviation, which may otherwise happen through the whole dispute, by means of a mistake in the beginning; and this having given occasion to the second question, the dispatching that already will mightily facilitate our enquiry into the third. The thing then to be examined is, whether the Society of true believers, who only are the Church, be visible or invisible, or whether both in some senses and respects.

For the resolution of this Query, I shall not say that this true Church being a Society of men, and so a body that hath its external order, as all other Societies have, hath likewise consequent to that a visibility common to it with all other bodies. Thus much is necessarily supposed, for the Believers are not Angels, nor invisible Spirits, but in this respect like the rest of mankind. But this visibility being supposed, we must further enquire, Whether there be not yet another, which gives it the Character of Jesus Christ's true Church; so that a man may say, That the body we see, and which

which is the object of our senses, as the true Church of Christ.

In this there would not be the least difficulty, had not God's design, as to his Church, been disturbed by the enemy of our Salvation. For since God calls true Believers only, and since, as we have already shewn, such alone constitute the Church; were it not for what happens from some other thing, there would not be among the outward Professors of Christianity, either Hypocrites, or Heretics, or Superstitious, or worldly, or profane persons. And thus none but such as are truly the faithful being to be found among them, this outward profession would be a sure means, and an unicinal Character to know the true Faith and Regeneration by, and consequently to know the true Church of Jesus Christ as such. So that we need say only thus much, That although the Church were not immediately visible by its inward and essential form, because none can immediately see mens hearts but God only; yet it would be visible by its external form, as by a sure distinguishing Character. For it might be seen by its Ministry and profession of Faith in Christ, and known to such a degree that a man might infallibly and positively say, *That is the Church.*

**Matt. 13** But we all know, that as Jesus Christ sowed his good seed in the field of the world, so to use the expressions in the Parable, the enemy hath likewise sown Tares. That is, that with the true Believers are intermixt vast numbers of men, who have no more than the appearance and outside of Christianity, and so make the outward profession to be a note subject to mighty uncertainties and equivocation. This God hath permitted for reasons known to his own wisdom, and hence have risen on one side false Churches, and on the other false members of the true. I mean whole Communities who have wrongfully assumed to themselves the title of a Church; and single persons who wrongfully assumed the title of the Faithful. So that the Church now, like all other things liable to hypocrisy and dissimulation, cannot be truly known without much difficulty. And whereas, according to the nature of the thing, the Churches visibility and invisibility ought to lye here, that its essential and internal form cannot be seen immediately, and of it self, but may by the mediation of its external form; instead of this, they do now consist further, in a discerning between true and false, a distinguishing betwixt that which is real and sincere, and that which is counterfeit.

We must therefore examine, how this distinction is to be made, because in it consists the visibility or invisibility of the true Church. Whether we must make it between several external bodies, differing from one another, or between several persons externally incorporated into the same Body. I begin with the former, and affirm, that the discerning between several bodies,

bodies, depends upon some certain marks, or characters, whereby that body on whose side the true Church is, may be distinguished from another where it is not. I shall not now shew what those Characters are, for this is another dispute between the Church of *Rome*, and us, which we need not here engage our selves in.

It is enough we are all agreed, that such marks there are, and that by them this distinction must be made. That which most concerns us to take notice of, and which I desire you would observe with a very particular attention, is, that after we have found this Body, or external Society on whose side the true Church is, we may, and in reality do form to our selves two notions of it, one proceeding from a mere Judgment of *Charity*, the other from a Judgment of *Reflection*. By the Judgment of *Charity*, we look upon all within the Body to be true Believers, indifferently; For the searching of hearts being not in our power, but peculiar to God, *Charity* makes no distinctions, but supposes that things are in truth what they should be; and upon this supposition, we call all that Society *the visible Church*, speaking simply, and absolutely. By the Judgment of *Reflection*, having consulted the Rules of Scripture, and the light of *Experience*, we come to know that there are Tares mixed with the Wheat, and that it is past a doubt, that among these outward Professours, are abundance of hypocritical, superstitious, ambitious, and profane people. Hence we correct our first notion, and term this Society, *a visible mixt Church*. Thus in the same external body, we distinguish two different Bodies, one of true Believers, which we look upon as the true Church of Jesus Christ; the other of hypocrites and worldlings, who have only the shadow, and shell of Faith and Regeneration, and consequently do not belong to Jesus Christ's true Church.

This is the original of all that ambiguity betwixt the *Romanists* and us. *M. de Condom*, according to the principles of Cardinal *Bellarmin* and *Perron*, and most of the Doctors of his Communion, does in this Dispute judge of the true visible Church, by that notion of *Charity*, which without making any difference, includes bad and good, true and false Believers. And we judge of the true visible Church, by that other, termed the notion of *Reflection*, which excludes hypocrites and worldlings, and confines it self to true Believers only. He supposes without offering any proof for it, that there is no other visible Church, than this whole Body of Professors, and that That of the true Believers is invisible; which we deny. He proves that the true Church of Christ, to whom the promises belong, is a visible Church, which we grant. We must take leave therefore to tell him, that he supposes, what he should prove, and proves what he ought to suppose; which must needs entangle the matter in dispute, and render it mighty intricate and obscure. F But

But what great matter is it (you'll say) as to this Dispute, whether a man judges of the true visible Church by the notion of *Charity*, or that of *Reflection*? I answer, if the matter had concerned only the Duties incumbent on the Church, or exhorting and instructing men in those Duties, it would signify very little which of these two notions we followed. For the duties incumbent on both good and bad, are much the same, they all hear the same Word, partake of the same Sacraments, and are all under the same Obligations. But the present controversy does not concern the duties and exhortations to them, but the investing the Church in some particular rights and priviledges allowed her, and applying to her the promises of Jesus Christ: So that it highly concerns us in this case, not to follow a notion which may lead us into mistakes, and give away these priviledges and promises to men that have no manner of right to them. It nearly concerns us not to follow a notion, which may occasion our falling into error, under pretence of that name, *the Church*. There is an absolute necessity of clearing an ambiguity, which if not cleared, may prejudice our Conscience, and put our Salvation upon a hazard.

Now, *Sir*, let us see I beseech you, whether of these two notions is rather to be received in this dispute? And this will easily appear, if we consider; That the notion followed by *M. de Condom* is grossly false in one of its parts, as taking for true Believers, persons who really are not so, and can pretend to truth no further, than as it is conformable to this second notion. That it is not grounded upon an exact knowledg of its object, but merely upon a charitable supposition, which if nicely look'd into, is not true it self: And so there can be no probable argument for allowing evil men and hypocrites a part in Christ's Promises, *Those false plants, which our heavenly father hath not planted, Those tares which the Lord hath not sown in his field, but the enemy rose by night to cast in privily*, Men not at all concerned in that Idea of the true Church which Scripture gives us, and consequently not of it. In a word, this will easily appear, that the notion we follow is the most exact, the most certain, the most agreeable to the Idea's given in Scripture, and the only one that can bear any proportion to the Promises of Jesus Christ, and the dignity of the true Church.

But it may be said, Was not *M. de Condom* in the right, to say, there was not actually any visible Church, but that which he defines, *A Society making profession to believe the Doctrine of Jesus Christ, and govern it self by his word*? And so no other than that which comprehends good and bad, true Believers and Hypocrites? And was it not fair then to make use of this notion in the Controversy? I answer, the true Church consisting of true Believers only, is not indeed visible, by any certain and distinct light we can have of it; so as to affirm positively and personally, such or such are

Matt. 15.

Matt. 13.

of

of the true Church. When we would carry on this distinction to particular men, disguise and hypocrisy put a stop to it, so that in this sense the true Church will always continue invisible, till Jesus Christ come to make a full and perfect separation betwixt his own Com and the Enemies Tares, which shall not be done till the end of the World. Thus it is not visible, not only immediately by its internal form in mens hearts, but even by these external Characters, as to certain and distinct visibility, because dissimulation and deceit often makes these marks to be doubtful. All this I grant.

But for all this, we may and must say, that the true Church is visible, truly visible, in other senses and respects. For first of all; it cannot be denied that it is visible at least materially, as they say, because the true Believers that appear visibly in publick Assemblies, partake of the same Sacraments, and live in the same external Order: The faithful do not conceal themselves, nor decline the Holy Exercises of Religion, but on the contrary frequent them, and shew themselves more than other men, rememb'ring that of St. Paul, *Not forsaking the assembling of our selves together.* Besides, It is plain, that tho the true Church be mixt with wicked men in the same profession, yet is it visible in this very mixture, as *the wheat is visible, tho in the same field with the tares, and the good fish in the same net with the bad,* according to the parables in the Gospel; or as true Friends are visible, tho mixt with dissemblers and flatterers. This mixture indeed hinders us from an exact distinction of persons, but still we may with great certainty distinguish and discern two sorts of persons. We are not sure which particular men are true Believers, and which Hypocrites, but we are sure that there are true Believers as well as Hypocrites; and this is enough to prove the Church visible, according to the Scriptures, and t. Austin's Hypothesis. Nay, I will go further yet; for 'tis true that upon some occasions Hypocrites do plainly distinguish themselves from true Believers, and upon some other occasions true Believers do plainly make a personal distinction of themselves from Hypocrites. For instance, when we see men drowned in vices inconsistent with true Faith, when we see them throw themselves into Superstitions and Errors, that are contrary to the true Doctrine and Worship of God, tho they abide still in the same Congregations with others, and communicate in the same Sacraments; yet this makes a negative distinction, so as we may say, these are not the true Believers, that is, not of the true Church. On the other side, when we see men undergo long sharp tryals, without being removed, either from the profession of the true Doctrine and Worship, or from that of Righteousness and Holiness, in this respect here is made a positive distinction, and such as makes us acknowledg, that these persons are of the true Church of

Heb. 10,  
25.  
Matt. 13

**Jesus Christ.** I confess these distinctions are not always, either so certain as never to admit of mistakes, nor so universal as not to confound one with another. For a man may judg rashly of both sorts, either for want of knowing mens particular circumstances, and the motives they went upon; or some other way; and it is never seen, that all Hypocrites discover themselves at once. But however, there is great use to be made of this distinction, and such a visibility of the true Church results from it, as is in some sort personal, according to our Hypothesis.

Now, *Sir*, you see, whether *M. de Condom* was in the right to take it for granted, as if it were a certain truth, that there was no visible Church, but such a one as he defined, that comprehends good and bad, true Believers and Worldlings, contrary to the Scriptures, and St. *Augustin*'s sense. You see too whether he was in the right, to maintain in this first part of his discourse, that we deny the Churches visibility. *The Pretended Reform'd* ( says he ) *will not have the visible Church to be that which is called Jesus Christ's Body. Which is then that Body where God hath established some Apostles? &c. Which is that Body where God hath placed several Members, and different Graces, the Grace of Ministry, the Grace of Teaching, the Grace of Exhortation and Consolation, the Grace of Ruling? Which, I say, is that Body, if it be not the visible Church?* We never denied the visible Church upon Earth to be Christ's Body; not the whole Body indeed, for there is one part of it collected in Heaven, and another not yet in being, but still that part upon Earth is Jesus Christ's Body, so the Scripture calls it, and we are so far from thinking as he saies, that quite contrary, we prove Hypocrites and Worldlings to be really no part of the true visible Church, by this very Argument, that it is called in Scripture the Body of Jesus Christ. For this reason the visible Church is thus defined in the 27th Article of our Confession of Faith.

\* *I will here set down the whole Article to give the Reader*

*The company of the Faithful agreeing to follow the Word of God, and that pure Religion grounded thereon, and who constantly make proficiency therein.* Now, this Company of the Faithful thus described, is, and is called *the Body of Jesus Christ*. If *M. de Condom* had been at the pains to read *Calvin*, he would find him speaking of the visible Church,

*more full Satisfaction in this matter.* *Credimus summo studio & prudentia discernendam esse veram Ecclesiam, cuius nomine nimiam multi abutuntur. Itaq; affirmamus ex Dei verbo, Ecclesiam esse fideliūm cœtum, qui in verbo Dei sequendo, & purâ religione colendâ consentiunt, in quâ etiam quotidie proficiunt; crescentes & confirmantes se mutuo in Dei timore, ut qui quotidiano progressu & profectu indigeant, quos etiam quantumcunq; promoveant, oporteat tamen assidue ad remissionem peccatorum confugere. Minimè tamen inficiamur, quin fidelibus hypocrite & reprobi multi sint permixti, sed quorum malitia Ecclesiae nomen dele non possit. Harmonia Confession. Sect. 10. Gallic. Confess. Edit. Genev. 1531.*

**Confer.**  
page 10.

**Rom. 12.**  
4.

in the 4th Book of his Institutions, Chap. 1. thus, || *It is no ordinary commendation the Scripture gives it, when 'tis said, Ephes. 5. 26, 27. that Christ hath chosen it, and separated it for his spouse, to make her without spot and wrinkle, his body, and his fullness.*

¶ Non vulgaris etiam laus, quod lecta, segregataq;

dicitur à Christo, in sponsam, quæ esset sine rugâ & maculâ, corpus & plenitudo ejus. *Calvin.* Lib. 4. Institut. Cap. 1. Sect. 10. Edit. Genev. 1588.

*M. Mestrezzat* speaking of the visible Church in the same sense, says, \* *The instruments made use of by God to build his Church, are the Pastors and Ministers of his Gospel, Ephes. 1. 23. according to that of St. Paul, Ephes. 4. He hath given some Apostles, and some Prophets, and some Evangelists, and some Pastors and Teachers, for the gathering together the Saints, for the work of the Ministry, for the edifying of the Body of Christ.*

\* Les Organes, def-  
quels Dieu  
se sert  
pour l'edi-  
fier &  
construire,

sont les Pasteurs & Ministres de son Evangile, selon que dit S. Paul, *Ephes. 4.* Il a donné les uns pour être Apôtres, les autres pour être Prophètes, les autres pour être Evangelistes, les autres pour être Pasteurs & Docteurs, pour l'assemblage des Saints, pour l'œuvre du Ministère, pour Pédifier du corps de Christ. *Mestrezzat de l'Eglise, Livre 1. Cap. 3. Pag. 31. Edit. Genev. 1649.*

And a little after, † *The same Body of Christ which is invisible as to the Election of God, and inward sanctification of the heart, enjoys the visible Ministry of the Word, and from it brings forth fruit unto salvation. For we must not look for the Church of God, out of this visible state of the Ministry of the Word.* The same thing I say with relation to that other passage of St. Paul, where he says, *Ephes. 5. 25, 26, 27.* Jesus Christ loved the Church, and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it, with the washing of water by the Word; That he might present it to himself a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle. *They will not have it possible,* (says *M. de Condom, Conference, Page 5.*) *for this place to be understood of the visible Church, nor yet of the Church on Earth.* He must pardon me if I say he is mistaken; for tho we understand by this, the Church already in Heaven, yet do we besides understand the visible Church upon Earth, and *M. Mestrezzat* speaking of this passage, saies expresly, ∵ *That St. Paul there sets forth the Church as one and the same Body, receiving Grace, and Glory, and makes Glory to be the perfection and accomplishment of Grace.* It is evident then, that the visible Church is in our Opinion Jesus Christ's Body, or which comes all to one, that the Body of Christ, which is the true Church upon Earth, is visible.

† Ainsi un même corps de Christ, qui est invisible quant à l'élection de Dieu, & à la sanctification du cœur, jouit du Ministère visible de la parole, & en reçoit le fruit du Salut. Car il ne faut pas chercher l'Eglise de

Dieu hors de l'état visible du Ministère de la parole. *Mestrezzat. Ibid. Pag. 33.* ∵ *Ainsi Ephes. 5. il propose pour l'Eglise, un même corps recevant la grace, & la gloire, & se représente la gloire, comme l'accomplissement de la grace.* *Mestrezzat Livre 1. Cap. 5. Pag. 30.*

I should

I should now conclude my Third Enquiry, did I not think my self under an obligation to remove some difficulties, which may be started upon it. For it may be said, the Ministry is common to good and bad, and consequently it makes a Church composed of good men and bad. I answer, that the Ministry and the use of it is common both to good and bad, comes to pass only by accident, and from the treachery of the Enemy. Of right it belongs to true Believers only, and its genuine design was for them. Jesus Christ gave it for the *assembling of the Saints*, and instituted it to increase and cultivate his good Corn. If the Tares use it, or to speak more truly, abuse it, this is contrary to his intention. For his *hand never sowed these, but the enemy's, who rose by night for that purpose.* It is sure then that the Ministry of it self does not make up a Church composed of good and bad men, because such only as it was intended to gather, are to be reckoned of his visible Church. Now the Ministry is designed to gather the true Believers, and truly Righteous, not the worldlings and hypocrites in the least. If they thrust themselves into the Assemblies, it is not the Ministry that calls them, but the spirit of the world that sends them thither. An invincible argument that there is no other visible Church, but what consists of true Believers, because they are the only persons call'd to Religious Assemblies; and it is not Jesus Christ, but Jesus Christ's enemy that thrusts others into them.

To give you yet further satisfaction as to this Point, permit me, *Sir*, to interpose between *M. de Condom* and *St. Augustin*; not to set them at difference, but endeavour to reconcile them. *M. de Condom* assures me, that Jesus Christ in that passage, *Tell it the Church*, spoke of a visible Church, a Church visible by the exercise of the Ministry; *St. Augustin* on the other side assures me, that he speaks of the Church consisting of true Believers only; I reconcile these two by inferring, That the Church of true Believers only is a Church made visible by the Exercise of the Ministry. *M. de Condom* tells me *St. Paul* speaks of a Church visible by the use of the Ministry, when he says, *Christ loved it, and cleansed it, with the washing of water by the word.* *St. Augustin* tells me, The Church of true Believers only is spoken of in this passage; I can reconcile these two no other way, than by concluding, that then the Church of true Believers only, is a Church visible by the use of the Ministry. *M. de Condom* teaches me, that in this passage, *Thou art Peter, and upon this rock will I build my Church*, Jesus Christ denotes a Church visible, by the Exercise of an External Ministry; *St. Augustin* instructs me, that it denotes the Church of true Believers; How shall these two be made agree, but by concluding, that the Church of true Believers then is a visible Church, exercising an external Ministry? If you still desire an Argument of more strength, remember that the visibility

Confer. p.  
7.  
Matt. 18.

Confer-  
ence, pag.  
5, 6.  
Ephes. 5.

Confer. p.  
8, 9.

bility attributed to the Church in Scripture, cannot possibly be any other than that we assign it. For as on the one hand we are taught there, that the true Church consists of true Believers only; so do we learn there also, that true Believers are mixt with wicked men and hypocrites: It is there we find the similitudes, of Chaff amongst the good Corn, of bad Filths jumbled together with the good, of Tares sown among the good Wheat. Now whatever we deliver concerning the Churches visibility and invisibility, is grounded entirely upon these two principles.

The second difficulty that may be started is, whether the visibility we assign to the Church, be sufficient to maintain Christian Fellowship, to comfort the Faithful, and bring them to Salvation. I answer, that this would not be sufficient indeed to establish the Church of *Rome's* pretensions, such as absolute authority over mens Consciences, Infallibility of Councils, a blind obedience to their Determinations, and this very insufficiency as to that shews us the injustice of such pretensions. But I say, that in its kind this visibility is sufficient, either for the maintenance of external Communion, or for the joy and consolation of the Faithful, and the bringing them to Salvation. In order to that, we need only know our selves to be in Communion with the truly Faithful. For tho we know that there is a mixture of ill men among these, yet shall we still continue in the external Communion with them, out of respect to God's Elect: We shall still bear the disorders and offences given by others patiently; we shall still receive the same Sacraments, and partake of other fruits of the Ministry with comfort, as knowing that the efficacy of these acts does not depend upon the wicked, but are blessings that belong to the righteous. And our not being able to make certain and personal distinctions of men, will add to our caution, that we suffer not our selves to be surprised into any superstitions and errors, that would insinuate themselves under the plausible title of the Church. And thus the visibility we allow the Church is abundantly sufficient.

It might further be demanded, whether it can so happen, that the Church may at any time lose the visibility of its Assemblies, and so become in this respect perfectly invisible? I answer, that although we acknowledge Almighty God can, whenever he pleaseth, utterly disperse the persons of the Faithful, and still keep them in this wretched condition by the methods of his own Providence; yet we do not think this ever did so happen. The Christian Church hath lain under great persecutions, but tho they were never so great, she hath constantly had some where or other some Assemblies, and some exercise of the Ministry, publick or private; and however her Martyrs and Confessors have all along made her visible, so that she cannot be said absolutely, ever to have disappeared quite from the

the sight of men; Yet we must own, that in this respect there have been several degrees of her visibility, that is, the Church hath been more or less visible, as her Assemblies have been held, and her Ministry exercised with more or less freedom. We must own too, that not any particular Church upon Earth can promise it self a perpetual visibility, nor nor so much as a perpetual subsistence. God removes his Candlestick from the midst of a people at his pleasure, and he does it then, when he hath no more Elect to call there. There have been many instances of this in the World, particularly in the Churches of *Africa*, once so beautiful and flourishing; but these are only the puttings out of some particular light, and do not at all prejudice either the subsistence, or visibility of the Christian Church in general.

The last difficulty to be urged is, whether the Church can at any time lose the visibility of its Characters, (I mean that visibility) whereby without descending to personal distinctions, we are enabled to conclude that there are true Believers in this mixed Society; so far as that we can not judge whether such be there or no? I answer, It not only may, but often hath happened, that the Characters by which we should in this respect come to know the true Church, have been so mightily obscured, that a man could not without much trouble and difficulty affirm, that *In this particular body it was, that God nourished and sustained his true Believers*; and we shall find hereafter that *M. de Condom* himself owns enough to establish the truth of this assertion. But still, tho this be uncontestable, as proved to be plain matter of fact, we do notwithstanding acknowledg, that the Church did never absolutely and entirely lose their visibility in this respect; because, as was said in answer to the Prejudices, we do not think that ever so total an Eclipse happen'd, that it could not in some measure be said, *This is the Society wherein God preserves some true Believers.*

And here I cannot but complain of what *M. de Condom* does afterwards in his Discourse accuse us of, saying, that the visible Church sometimes ceases to be. *They are constrained (says he) to say, that the visible Church sometimes ceases to be upon Earth.* And in another place, *This is the Church, which your Ministers know not: They teach you that this visible and exterior Church may cease to be upon Earth.* But this is urging his charge against us too far: So far are we from believing, the visible Church ceases to be, that we do not so much as say, it ever absolutely ceases to be visible: And yet there would be a mighty difference, between saying she ceases to be visible, and that she ceases to be at all. The Sun, the most visible thing in the World, is often not visible to our eyes, but yet he ceases not to be. In the point of Real presence, *M. de Condom* will own, that the Body of

Confer.  
pag. 10.  
Pag. 12.

Jesus

Jesus Christ ceases to be visible; but he would not be well-pleased for that reason to be taxed with saying, he ceases to be there at all. But however, let *M. de Condom* put what sense he please upon our words, it is certain we acknowledg the Church to be perpetually visible, in the meaning I explain'd just now: And *M. de Condom* could never have spent his time to less purpose, than in taking such pains to confute an opinion which we never held against him.

Quest. 4. *What Church the Promises of Jesus Christ belong to; whether that defined by M. de Condom, a Society making profession to believe, &c. or that which we define, A Society which making profession to govern it self by Christ's Word, does really govern it self by it?*

*M. de Condom* speaking of us in one place of his Discourse, says, *They have not the Consolation which the Catholicks have, to see Jesus Christ's promise visibly accomplish'd, and maintain'd, during so many Ages. They cannot shew a Church which has ever been since Jesus Christ came to build it on the Rock; and to save his word, they are obliged to have recourse to a Church of the Predestinate, which, neither themselves, nor any else can shew.* After having cleared the perpetual visibility of the Church, as you lately saw, judg you, Sir, what ground there is for his saying, we have not the consolation of seeing Jesus Christ's Promise visibly accomplish'd and maintain'd during so many Ages; and whether we have not more than it is possible to have, according to the Church of Rome's principle. *M. de Condom* according to his Principle, sees the duration of a Church, whose whole essence consists in an outward profession. What is there in this more than human? We see the duration of a Church, whose essence consists in true Faith and Regeneration. What is there in this that is not all Divine? *M. de Condom* sees the duration of a Church supported by politick methods, by paying a blind obedience to the injunctions of great men, and those perhaps Hypocrites too, What is there in this more than human? We see the duration of a Church preserved in spight of confusion, and all the foward malice of men: What is there in this less than Divine? *They cannot* ( says he ) *shew a Church which hath ever been since Jesus Christ came to build it on the Rock.* Yes, we shew this Church built on the Rock; for when we shew the Body in which God nourishes and breeds up his true Believers, we shew at the same time those true Believers, which are his Church built on the Rock, tho mixt with such as build on the Sand. When we shew the field where Jesus Christ sowed his good Seed, we shew the Wheat, tho there be Tares among it. But let *M. de Condom* tell us, if he think fit, how he can shew us a Church built on the Rock, making, as he does, the essence of the

Confer.  
p. 8.

*An Answer to M. de Condom's*

Church to consist entirely in an outward profession. If he call this a Church upon the Rock, Jesus Christ himself will reply for that such only are built upon a Rock, *who hear this word, and do it*; whereas all besides are built upon the Sand. *To save Christ's Word* (continues he) *they are obliged to have recourse to a Church of the Predestinate.* Does M. de Condom blame us for seeking the accomplishment of Jesus Christ's Promises, in the body of his Elect, and true Believers? Pray where should we look for it else? In a crowd of Hypocrites and Reprobates, that have no Faith, no Holiness, no Piety, but in outward appearance only? Such as God never call'd, and Jesus Christ shall one day tell, he never knew them? Is not this of Cardinal Bellarmin's, Perron's, and M. de Condom's, a curious Church, to the constituting whereof no inward virtue is necessarily required, but merely an outward profession of Faith, and communicating in the Sacraments? A Church, whose Unity, the formal essence of it, is *that of an external Vocation, nor that of Predestination, nor internal Faith, nor a Union of Souls by the works of Love*: In a word, a Church defined, not by believing, and governing it self by God's word, but by *making profession to believe and govern it self by God's Word*? Is not this putting a mighty value upon Jesus Christ's Promises, to apply them not only to profane and worldly men, as well as the Saints and regenerate; but to such a Church as would remain entire, tho' there were no true Believers, nor righteous men in it; and not cease to be the true Church of Christ, tho' it were composed of Hypocrites, and none else?

Thus far, Sir, there is no great perspicacity required, to discern, that the question in hand resolves it self, there being little probability that Jesus Christ was so layish of his Promises. But however let us examine the matter a little more closely. The first passage M. de Condom presents us with, is that of St. Paul, *Christ loved the Church, and gave himself for it, that he might cleanse it with the washing of Water by the Word, that he might make it a glorious Church, having neither spot, nor wrinkle, nor any such thing, but that it might be holy and without blemish.* And a little after, *No man hateth his own flesh, but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the Church; For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones.* We see in these words, the obligation Jesus Christ put himself under, to sanctify his Church, to make it a glorious Church, without spot or wrinkle, holy and without blemish, to nourish and cherish it, as his own flesh and bones. Our busines is to know, whether this obligation can upon any pretence whatever respect Hypocrites and wicked men; And who will be perfwaded it does? *This Church, M. de Condom says, is glorious, because she glorifies God, because she declares to all the Earth the Glory of Jesus Christ's Gospel and Cross.* Now as to the wicked, of whom we are here treating,

Confer. p.  
5, 6.

Ephef. 5.  
23, 26, 27.  
29, 30.

Confer. p.  
6.

there

there need but this one word be added, That they glorify God and the Gospel in hypocrisy and disimulation, but in their hearts deny it. Then see what God himself hath spoken as to this matter. *Unto the ungodly said God, why dost thou preach my laws, and takest my Covenant in thy mouth?* Psal. 50. 16. *This Church ( M. de Condom tells us ) is holy, because she always, constantly, and without varying teaches the Holy Doctrine.* Add here, But as for the wicked, if they teach the holy Doctrine, this is but with their lips, and in shew only; then see what St. Paul says, *They have a form of godliness, but deny the power thereof, from such turn away.* *This Church ( according to M. de Condom ) hath neither spot nor wrinkle, because she bath neither any evil Error, nor any evil Maxim, and because she instrucſ, and contains in her bosom the Elect of God.* Add, But as for sinners, They follow Truth and Right only in pretence. Then see what Jesus Christ says of such, *Many will say unto me in that day, Lord, have not we prophesied in thy name, and in thy name have cast out Devils, and in thy name have done many wonderful works?* *Then will I say unto them, I never knew you, depart from me ye workers of iniquity.* And can any man after all this allow them a propriety in the Promises of Christ?

The second passage *M. de Condom* makes use of, is that of Jesus Christ, which I will here set down at length. *Tell the Church; but if he neglect to bear the Church, let him be unto thee as a heathen man, and a Publican; verily I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven.* Again I say unto you, that if two of you shall agree on earth, as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them, of my Father which is in heaven; For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them. Jesus Christ, *M. de Condom* says, *used the word Church to signify this visible Society.* I agree with him, that the Church there signifies a visible Church; I say further, that it signifies a Church represented by the Pastors, by whom it binds and looses, by whom it asks the Father; I am still of opinion, that those excellent Promises of Jesus Christ, that God will ratify what they have bound and loosed, that he will grant what they ask, and that the Lord himself will be in the midst of them, are all made to the Church taken in this sense. But then I say withal, that this visible Church is that of the true Believers only, and that Hypocrites have no share at all in it. It is to the true Believers alone, that this Ministry belongs, they are the persons represented by the Pastors, they the only people that ask and obtain, that are gathered together in Christ's name, and in the midst of whom he is. And yet it often happens, that the Ministers of this Church, tho they be in this function, and do the business of it,

Conf. p. 7.

## An Answer to M. de Condom's

\* Ali quando  
Commo-  
rio ipa  
tempora-  
lis facit, ut  
quædam  
pertinentes  
ad civitatem  
Babyloniam,  
admini-  
strent res  
pertinen-  
tes ad Je-  
rusalem.

Onnes de

quibus dictum est, Quæ dicunt facite, quæ autem faciunt, nolite facere, cives sunt *Babylonie* administrantes Remp. civitatis *Jerusalem*. Si enim nihil administrarent civitatis *Jerusalem*, unde est, Quæ dicunt facite? Unde, In *Cathedrâ Moysi* sedent? Rursus si cives sunt ipsius *Jerusalem*, qui regnabant in *eternum* cum Christo, unde Quæ faciunt, facere nolite? Aug. in *Psal. 61*.

Confer.  
p. 8, 9.

M. de Condom's third passage is this, *Thou art Peter, and upon this rock will I build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.* Jesus Christ (says he) would shew something illustrious and clear, when he said, that his Church, *maugre* the opposition of Hell, should be always invincible: he would, I say, shew something clear and resplendent, which might serve in all Ages, for a sensible and palpable assurance of the immutable certainty of his Promises. He adds, *The Church of which Christ speaks, is then a confessing Church, a Church that publishes the Faith, and consequently an exterior and visible Church.* He says further, *That it is a Church, to which an exterior Ministry is given; for this added, I will give unto thee the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt bind on Earth shall be bound in Heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt loose on Earth shall be loosed in Heaven.* I answer, The Church spoken of in this passage is really a Confessing Church, a Church that publishes the Faith, a Church to whom Christ hath given an exterior Ministry; a Church that uses the Ministry of the Keys, that binds and looses, and by Consequence an exterior and visible Church. The Question is, whether wicked men, let them dissemble never so well, and carry never so fair an outside, do truly belong to this Church, or whether it consist of sincere Believers only. 'Tis a Church exterior and visible, I acknowledg it, but it is also a Church interior, and real; otherwise it would differ nothing from a Phantome, a cheating apparition. 'Tis a Confessing Church, and publishes the Faith, but it is likewise a Church believing in what it confesses and publishes.

lishes. 'Tis a Church, to which not only St. Peter's *Confession* must be attributed, but also the *principle* and *ground* of that Confession. *Blessed art thou Simon Bar-jona, for flesh and blood hath not revealed this unto thee, but my Father which is in Heaven:* And therefore whose Confession proceeds not from *Flesh and Blood*, but from *Grace and Divine Illumination*. 'Tis a Church *built upon a Rock*, and not upon the *Sand*, therefore not a Church that *Hypocrites* are of. 'Tis a Church *built by Jesus Christ*; a Church therefore of true Believers only, because such only are built by Christ. 'Tis a Church to which this *Promise of the Gates of Hell never prevailing against it*, belongs; And can we with any pretence to modesty say, that the *Gates of Hell* do not prevail against the wicked ingulfed in vice? Can we say those admirable words carry no stronger importance, than the *preservation of a mere exterious profession?* But *this is a Church which hath, and exerciseth such a Ministry.* Who questions it? But does this *Ministry* belong to the wicked and hypocrites? No. It belongs only to true Believers, the rest have no part in it; only as they sometimes exercise the *external Offices*, without any true right to them; or receive them unworthily, under the covering of *hypocrisy*, and being intermixt with good Christians. But *M. de Condom* says further, *Jesus Christ promised something illustrious and clear, which might serve in all Ages for a sensible and palpable assurance of the immutable certainty of his Promises.* These words want a little unfolding; If they understand hereby a temporal prosperity, a perpetual visibility promised to the Church, in pomp and lustre, I deny that Christ promised any such thing. If they understand an Earthly Dominion, a worldly Greatness under the title of *Hierarchy*, I deny still that Christ ever promised any such thing. If they understand a constant unblemisht purity in the *Ministry*, in the *Matters of Doctrine and Worship*, of *moral Rules*, and *orderly Government*, This again I deny that Christ ever promised. If they understand Believers *perseverance in Faith and Holiness*, so far forth as is necessary to *Salvation*, in *despight of all temptations to the contrary, from Hell, the World, and their own Infirmities*, This I own our Lord hath promised. Now this in my opinion is a thing sufficiently illustrious and clear, to serve for a sensible and palpable assurance, of the *immutable certainty of his Promises*. For when we see our Brethren dye, and do our selves dye in the bosom of *Truth and Piety*, this denotes Jesus Christ's *Grace* sensibly enough. If they understand over and above this, a *perpetual subsistence of the Ministry*, in such a condition as is sufficient for the *Salvation of God's Elect*, *maugre all the oppositions of Hell, or the disorders of the Ministers themselves*, this I do likewise acknowledg to be promised by Jesus Christ, and herein we have a sensible and palpable assurance of the *immutable certainty of his Promises*. For in

Matt. 16.  
17.

in the midst of so many infirmities as the Faithful are liable to; in the midst of so many Thorns as encompass and incumber the Lilies of the Son of God; in the midst of so many superstitious, profane, heretical, designing, worldly-minded, lukewarm and indifferent people, that are exterior Professors, and often Officers in the Church; that God should still preserve the Ministry, so far as is necessary for nourishing and cherishing his Elect, and true Believers, and to bring them safe to Heaven; is a sensible indication of the strength of our Saviours Words, *That the Gates of Hell should not prevail against it.* He does not say, the Gates of Hell shall never fight against it, nor that they shall never get any advantages over it; He supposes that they shall encounter it, that they shall very much damage it, that they shall sometimes reduce it to great extremities; But he assures us, *they shall not prevail.* In this the Assistance and perpetual Providence of Christ is the more gloriously illustrated, that the Church can

Pl. 129. 2.  
Matt. 28.

Confer.  
P. 9.

M. de Condom alledges next, those words of our Saviour, *Go and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the father, and of the son, and of the holy ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; And lo I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.* Upon which Text M. de Condom puts this Comment. *Teaching with you, Baptizing with you, Instructing with you my Faithful, to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded, consequently exercising with you in my Church and exterior Ministry. 'Tis with you, 'tis with those who shall succeed you, 'tis with the Society assembled under their Conduct, that I shall be from this present, even to the consummation of the World, always, without interruption; For there shall not be any one moment in which I will leave you, but tho absent in Body, I will be always present by my holy Spirit.* I own that Christ speaks there to his Church, that he orders it to Baptize, to Teach, and consequently gives it a Ministry, which he commands to be exercised therein. I acknowledg moreover, that he promises to be with it, to Teach with it till the consummation of the World, without interruption; but this is not the point in controversy. All our busines is to know, what Church this is; M. de Condom will have it all, that Society *that makes profession to believe, &c.* we think it to be that, which making profession to believe, does so really and sincerely. He supposes his Proposition without offering Arguments for it; but we prove ours. For no man can say, that Christ is with wicked men and hypocrites, by the presence of his Holy Spirit, always, without interruption; that there is never any moment when he leaves them, even to the Consummation of the World. This can be affirmed of none but the Society of true Believers: Such a Society there will always be, and Jesus Christ always in the midst

of them, baptizing, and instructing with them; For tho the mouth and hand of his enemies may often exercise the outward acts of the Ministry, and often with abundance of impurity and disorder; yet Jesus Christ does for ever preserve his faithful under the Ministry which is rightfully theirs, he does ever baptize, and teach them even by wicked Ministers, so as by his wonderful Providence, never to suffer so fatal a corruption in the Ministry, as should render it insufficient to cherish the Faith of his Elect, even to the conclusion of the World.

To the same purpose it is manifest St. Paul speaks of the design and duration of the Evangelical Ministry. *Jesus Christ hath given some Apostles, and some Prophets, and some Evangelists, and some Pastors and Teachers, for the perfecting of the Saints, for the work of the Ministry, for the edifying of the Body of Christ. Till we all come in the unity of the Faith, and of the knowledg of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. That is, says M. de Condom, the Ecclesiastical Ministry shall last without any discontinuance till the general Resurrection.*

Ephes. 4.

Confer. p. 9, 10.

I say once again; this is not the Point in Controversy. The Ministry shall last to the end of the World, and in such a degree and condition too, as may suffice for the edifying of the Body of Christ, for the conducting all his Elect, and true Believers to that perfection St. Paul speaks of. Our concern is to know two things, The first, whether This shall be constantly preserved from corruption and impurity, and continue in the state wherein Christ and his Apostles left it us; or whether the Tares sown by the Enemy in the Lord's Field by night, shall not vitiate it? The second, whether its uninterrupted continuance must wholly consist in being ordinarily transmitted from one Minister to another, in the way we call exteriour or personal succession; or whether it may not happen, that the Church should sometime take away her Ministry from them, who have palpably abused it; and commit it to others, who the may hope will use it better? Each of these two are the matters in dispute, and not that which M. de Condom was pleased to determine from that place of St. Paul.

Give me leave, Sir, to run over these wonderful Promises of Jesus Christ to his Church, and some others of the same nature once more. *The Gates of Hell shall not prevail against her. He will present her without spot or wrinkle, holy and without blemish. He will love and cherish her as his own flesh and bones. He will bring her in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledg of the Son of God, to the measure of a perfect man. He will be in the midst of her at solemn Assemblies. He will continue with her to the end of the World. He will give his spirit to abide with her for ever. He will redeem her from all iniquity, and purify her, that she may be a peculiar people zealous of good works. He will build*

Matt. 16.  
Ephes. 5.  
Ephes. 4.  
Matt. 18.  
Matt. 28.  
John. 14.  
Tit. 2.  
Ephel. 2.

Jer. 31. build-ber upon himself, to be an holy Temple, an habitation of God through the spirit. He will write his laws in their hearts, and engrave them in their minds.  
 Ezek. 36. He will take away the heart of stone, and give them an heart of flesh, a new heart, and a new spirit.

How is it possible, that nothing of all this should surprise the Doctors of the Romish Communion, nor stagger their confidence, of finding these Promises fulfilled, as well in the bad as the good, the just as well as unjust? For in short, if wicked men, who have no more than external profession, become by virtue of that profession, really and truly Members of the Church; the Promises concern them, and they have a right to them in common with others; for certainly they concern as many as make up the Body of Christ. Now shall we say, that notwithstanding these are drowned in vice, *Yet the Gates of Hell shall never prevail against them*, provided they can but counterfeit dexterously? Shall we say, that tho gangrened and putrifid from the crown of the head to the sole of the foot, it matters not; *They shall be without spot or wrinkle, holy and without blemish*; so they do but continue in an external profession? Shall we say, that tho they have no Faith, no Justice, no Piety, they need not trouble themselves, Jesus Christ *will be with them always* by the presence of his Holy Spirit, provided they can but maintain a fair outside? Shall we say, that although they prostitute themselves to all wickedness and villany, they need not be so much concerned, Jesus Christ will not fail *to redeem them from all iniquity*, and to make of them *a peculiar people, zealous of good works*, provided they be not wanting in dissimulation? Here is no invidious aggravation in all this. The Promises of Christ are plain matters of fact, delivered expressly in Scripture in favour of the Church. The defining of the Church by a bare external profession, is another plain matter of fact, to be seen through all the Writers of that Communion, and particularly this discourse of *M. de Condom*. The applying these Promises to the Church thus defined, is what *M. de Condom* stily contends for, and makes it an inducement to peoples conversion. So that I do not in the least exaggerate, nor do I see what reply they can make. To talk of two true Churches even in Christ's sight, one to which the Promises belong as such, *viz.* That of True Believers; and another to which they do not belong as such, *viz.* That, whose essence consists in the external profession; besides that it would be advancing a notion contrary to Scripture and Reason, which inform us but of one true Church; would be to argue to no purpose; for wherefore should we argue about a Church to which the Promises of Jesus Christ have no relation? Why should we invest with such glorious and divine privileges, a Church to which Christ hath promised nothing at all? Or what reason have we with a blind obedience to submit

mit to a Church, where it may happen, that wicked men, and Enemies of God, may get the upper hand, and the Spirit of Christ bear no Rule in it?

To say we ought to distinguish between two kinds of Promises, one such as respect inward Sanctification, and Salvation, the other respecting the perpetual Visibility of the Ministry, and its Infallibility in the external profession of the Truth; and that the first sort are peculiar to the Elect and true Believers in the Church, but the other belong to the whole Body of that Society making Profession; besides that this would be to start a Division of the Promises, which the Scripture divided not, for all made there, are made to one and the same Body, to one and the same Church, without distinction: besides, that this would be to frame Promises that never were given, such as a perpetual Infallibility of the Ministry in the external Profession of the Truth, as we lately saw: Besides this, I say, it is plainly to suppose that the Church, as a Church, hath no promises made her of Sanctification, and Salvation, and so consequently, 'tis to oppose Scripture, which makes them to her formally under the name and title of a Church. *The Gates of Hell shall not prevail against my Church,* says Christ. *Christ loved the Church,* says St. Paul, *and gave himself for it,* that he might sanctifie it, and present it to himself a glorious Church, having neither spot, nor wrinkle, nor any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish. *The Lord (says the Apostle) nourishes and cherishes the Church;* all these Promises imply Sanctification and Salvation. What can we then with reason say to this matter? except what was said upon the foregoing Question, to wit, That we sometimes form an Idea of the Church, by a Judgment of *Charity*, so looking upon all external Professors in general to be true Believers, and by this Judgment we include in our Notion abundance of People who really and indeed are not of the Church, and consequently have no title to the Promises of Jesus Christ. But this Notion is rectified by a Judgment of *Reflection*, *Exactness*, and *Truths* formed from the Idea's which Scripture and right Reason give us of the true Church, restraining it to true Believers only; and that the Promises of Scripture must be applyed to it in this last, true, exact Notion only. Add to this, that this true Church being intermixt with the counterfeit, is not indeed so distinctly visible, that we can say with certainty, this or that particular man is a true Believer; for this is proper to God alone; but that it is however visible, in a sure, though indistinct manner, which will go so far as to affirm, That there are true Believers in such an external Profession: Add further, that this Church thus visible, becomes more or less so, according as Corruptions and Disorders are more or less predominant in their exteriour Society;

and that sometimes it is mightily eclipsed, partly through the prevalence of worldly, superstitious, and such like Persons; partly through the infirmities of most true Believers; but still that it never was absolutely invisible: Add once more, that this Church now upon Earth, together with that in Heaven, and that which shall spring up in succeeding Ages, are all three that *Universal Church*, we profess to believe in our Creed: Add, I say, these three last Propositions to the two foregoing, and so you will comprise all I have advanced hitherto; you will be furnished with certain uncontested Principles grounded upon Scripture, upon Reason, upon the Fathers, and upon experience; by the help of which you will be able with great ease to throw off all those difficulties usually started by the Romanists upon this Subject. This will be further evidenced by what I am in the next place about to say.

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*Natural and necessary Consequences of the foregoing Principles.*

THE first Consequence, Sir, to be drawn from what I said, is, that *M. de Condom* hath been very unjust, in upbraiding us, as if we dealt with that Article of our Creed concerning the *Universal Church*, as the *Arrians* and *Macedonians* do with those that relate to Jesus Christ and the Holy Ghost; which is to confess them with the mouth, but in effect to reject them, by not believing them as we ought. Those Heretics evacuate the Articles concerning Jesus Christ, and the Holy Ghost, because they allow them a Divinity, which is but a seeming, and imaginary one only; and thus they rob Jesus Christ and the Holy Ghost of their Real Essence. Can any man say we do thus by the Church? we make it essentially to consist in true and solid Faith, and Regeneration. Is not this to make it real? what may be said of such as make it essentially to consist in a bare outward Profession? Is not this to make it no better than a Phantome, a Shadow? Is not this to confess with the mouth, but in effect to reject it? Does not this make all those great and noble Ideas given of it in Scripture dwindle into nothing? Judge you, Sir, if you please, to which of these two Parties *M. de Condom's* reproach is most applicable.

II. By all I have said concerning the Visibility or Invisibility of the Church, you may know what an unjust accusation they load us with daily,

of making the Church utterly invisible, upon pretence that we place it in true Believers only ; for if this accusation were true, it would fall not upon us, but upon Scripture, upon the Fathers, and particularly upon St. *Augustine*, whose Principles we follow intirely. But as St. *Paul* never thought of making a Church perfectly invisible, though he said, *The foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, the Lord knoweth them that are his ; and let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity* ; so neither do we pretend to spoil her of her Visibility, when we say the same thing he did. As St. *Augustin* hath not made her invisible, though he said all that was related out of him ; the same thing must be said for us. But what can we think of this method of disputing, which supposing the charge upon tryal, to be a granted contest thing, falls strongly upon proving the Church's Visibility ; and so Proselytes men upon this false supposition, and those useless Arguments ? Do not you look upon this, as a very fair way of proceeding ?

2 Tim. 2.  
19.

III. Hence likewise you may perceive, how unjustly they put that question to us, Where our Church was before the Reformation ? For if the Church consist of true Believers alone, as we have shewn, ours was then just where it is now, *i. e.* in the common Field, where Jesus Christ hath sown his Wheat, and the Enemy by Night his Tares. There is only a twofold difference observable. One, that before the Reformation, that part of the Field where the Corn was sown, was wider, whereas now it is contracted into less room, because in many places the Tares have driven away the Wheat, and remain alone ; another, that then in the places where Wheat and Tares grew together, the Wheat was thinner, and got less nourishment, and the Tares quite contrary ; whereas now the Wheat is thicker, and better cultivated.

The Field is the World (as Christ says) the good Corn are true Believers, the Tares are the Children of this World. Before the Reformation, the true Believers were mixt with the rest in the same exterior Profession, as they are still ; but they were, if I may so say, stifled as it were with the great number of the other sort, and the spiritual life they led had much of uneasiness, by reason of the Corruptions in the Ministry, which stinted them in their necessary Food, and besides mixt many such things with it, as were not only incapable of sustaining life, but even prejudicial to it : Whereas, since the Reformation these same Believers being separated from the rest, are by this means much disburdened of that which opprest them ; they are more at liberty, the Ministry allows them the Food of heavenly life in a much larger proportion, and gives it them more pure, and free from strange mixtures ; and though they still con-

tinue among worldly men, yet now they do not find near so much prejudice from them.

IV. Another Instance of this nature is commonly given us, and how injurious it is, you may discern by the Principles laid down before. They bid us shew them these true Believers before the Reformation, single them out, say they, tell us their names, were they visible or invisible? If even at this time, when things are not near so confused, none but God only can know distinctly and infallibly, what particular men are the true Believers; If their visibility consist only in ones being able to say with certainty, there are true Believers, and not in saying such or such are the men; is it not a very unjust demand to examine us of past Ages, when things were so strangely in the dark? Would not any man of equity think it enough, that we can shew how far soever the Ministry was corrupted, that still the true Believers might subsist under it? and is not this very thing a visible indication of the Churches perpetual Visibility, that God hath not forsaken us?

V. Another necessary Consequence of the Principles now establisht, is, that in an exteriour Society carrying the name of a Church, it may so happen according to the Notion we frame of it, from a Judgment of Charity, that the Ministry, Ecclesiastical Dignities, and Chairs, as they are termed, may come to be filled by Hypocrites, Superstitious, Worldly, and interested Persons, and that there shall be a great many more such as these in Office, than good men. For seeing God only can have a distinct and personal knowledge of true Believers, and since he does not bestow these Offices immediately, and by his own hand; it may without question come to pass, that both those that confer, and those that take upon them these Offices, may be the Tares sown in the Lord's Field. A man cannot have any absolute certainty, that this shall not be so; because there is not any promise to the contrary; and because on the other hand, there are instances that it hath been so already. To pretend this cannot be, because it would hinder the Churches subsisting for ever, is no Argument at all; for if the Church consist properly of true Believers, as hath been undeniably proved, the perpetual subsistence of true Believers does not depend on the faithfulness of the Ministers, nor the untainted purity of the Ministry; except we suppose the Principle of a blind Obedience to the Ministers, which is a false Principle, and destructive of Religion, as hath been made appear in the defence of the Reformation. Indeed this ground being laid, when once the Ministry is corrupted, it must needs follow, that the faithful are corrupted too, because bound to receive implicitly

plicitely whatever is delivered to them by their Ministry. But reject this principle, and there is no reason why the Faithful may not separate the good from the bad, and why they may not sublitt under such a Ministry, by the help of that distinction which the Grace of God enables them to make. And here, *Sir*, allow me to wonder a little at the pleasant double which the Doctors of the *Romish* Communion make when they dispute. Our first and main question is, whether we ought to acquiesce in the Council of *Trent*'s Determinations? Yes, say they, you must yield an implicit obedience to the Decrees of the Prelates assembled in a Body. But why an Implicit Obedience? Because ( say they ) the Church cannot sublitt without it. But why cannot it sublitt without it? Cannot it sublitt by resuming the Ministry out of such hands, and putting it into better? Cannot it, without going so far, sublitt by separating between good and bad food? No; they tell you, it cannot, because it is obliged to receive implicitly whatever the Prelates in a Body shall deliver. What way of disputing call you this, if it be not quite to swerve from good sense and reason, and to be lost in an impertinent maze? For is not this a perfect round, first to prove an Implicit Obedience, because the Church cannot otherwise sublitt; and then to prove the Church cannot otherwise sublitt without this Obedience, because men ought to obey implicitly?

VI. But let us proceed in drawing our Consequences. And being we hit upon the point of the Implicit Obedience they exact to the deciſions of Bishops, and that Sovereign and Absolute Authority wherewith they would invest them, let us try, if this can agree with the Principles we have establish'd. I meddle not now with those other reasons that might be made use of; you will find them in part in the Book I quoted just now. All I shall say is, that since no man can have a distinct knowledg of the True Believers, and that the True Church consists of such alone; no man consequently can be secure, that this Body of Prelates, whether considered single, or whether as convened in a Council, are the true Church. Yes, but says one, they represent the true Church. I agree with you; so far as the True Believers are still under their Ministry: But representing the True Church does not presently endue them with its Opinions and Affections. The true Church in conferring her Ministry upon men, does not confer upon them withal, either true Faith, or true Regeneration, much less perfect Infallibility. Hence, whatever determinations they give, are still subject to an examination. If these prove conformable to God's Word, it is our duty, not only to embrace them, but further to respect the Body of Ministers as the true Church Representative; because they have express her sense; and Charity will carry us still further, and incline us

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us to esteem them true Believers, because they have acted as such. But when their divisions are found to disagree with God's Word, we are to look upon them as men that have abused their ministry. If this happen in things not plainly interesting the Conscience, their ministry must be born with, and the liberty of separating the clean from the unclean, natural to every Believer, made use of. If they do intercept the Conscience, we groan under their ministry, we pray to God, we implore succors from above, still using the Liberty of Conscience to refuse the Evil, and retain the Good. But if this Body of Prelates proceed to violent taking away this necessary and indispensable Liberty of Conscience, and reduce the faithful to this hard straignt, either to be damned for false Doctrine, in slavishly following their Ministers errors, or damn'd for dissimulation in pretending to follow them; Then the true Believers ought to look upon them as men that have strip't themselves of the right of the Ministry, to oppose them, to take it from them, and repole the trust in other hands. It is evident then, the supreme Authority we contend about, cannot take place, because it is continually in danger of being invested in worldly men, to whom it cannot in any case belong. And so we should be continually in danger of mistaking That for the Church Representative, which neither is really, nor can possibly be so.

VII. The seventh Use to be made of what we have advanced, is the right apprehending of some expressions used by us, *viz.* *That the Church is corrupted*, that the *state of the Church hath been interrupted*, and the like, so as to reconcile these with Jesus Christ's Promises: which import not only the perpetual existence, but also the perpetual holiness and incorruption of the Church. Now for that corruption attributed by us to the Church, I say, that whereas the Promises of Christ concern the true Church, that is, True Believers only; our expression on the contrary respects the Church, according to that *Idea of Charity* we form of it, including all external Professors, which are ordinarily call'd the Visible Church. 'Tis of the Church taken in this last notion, that we say, she is corrupted; for the whole Body being made up, as we have seen, of good and bad men, it hath come to pass, that the wicked are mightily increased, and the spirit of the World, which is a spirit of error and superstition, shewed it self in an eminent manner. But we do not understand true Believers to be corrupted, only so far forth as they may possibly have contracted some tincture of infirmity, by conversing with the others. And for that interruption of the state of the Church, mentioned in our Confession of Faith,

Faith, where we say, \* *That the state of the Church being interrupted, it was necessary it should be raised up again out of its ruines and desolation*: The meaning of those exprestions is, not what *M. de Condom* pretends, that the true Church ceases to exist, or that its Ministry was quite extinct in those times which we call times of desolation and ruine, for we make a distinction between the *Church*, and the *state of the Church*. The Church is the true Believers making profession of Truth, and Christian Piety, and a real Holiness, under a Ministry, which dispenses all nourishment necessary for spiritual life, without keeping back any; Its natural and proper state is to be freed, as much as its militant condition can admit, from the impure mixture of prophanie worldly men; not to be covered over, and as it were swallowed up with this Chaff and Tares; to have a pure Ministry, not incumbred with errors, with false worship, superstitious customs; a Ministry in the hands of good men, who are in possession of it by honest methods, and set a good example to others. This State is what we think hath been interrupted, having seen strange opinions brought into Religion, Superstitions propagated, the Ministry invaded by men neither deserving, nor capable of it, and that were advanced by scandalous and unlawful methods; having seen vices openly predominant amonc Churchmen, the Pulpits more zealous for Tales and Legends, than the Word of God; The Schools busying themselves with ridiculous Questions and Curiosities, the Sacraments burdened with strange Ceremonies, the instruction and edification of mens Souls wretchedly neglected; and in a word, the Gospel liberty changed into a temporal slavery. This is what we mean by the state of the Church being interrupted; this the ruine and desolation we bewail. The Church hath not ceased to exist, nor did she perfectly lose her visibility, or her Ministry, God forbid: But both she and her Ministry have seen the natural state they ought to continue in, changed and interrupted.

VIII. Apply these principles now to our Reformation, and then, *Sir*, you will discern, that granting this supposition to be true, that the Body of the Prelates invested in the ministry of the Church in our Fathers days, and assembled in the *Trent* Council, supposing, I say, that they delivered such determinations in points of Faith, as are incompatible with Salvation; Granting it to be true, that they took away Christian Liberty by Anathematizing all who should refuse to believe, and submit to those determinations as they did; and by adding to all this violence and compulsion, our Fathers had reason to look upon them as Ministers that had justly deprived themselves of all right to exercise their Ministry over them by such ill conduct, and to give that power of the Ministry to others. They had

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inſerted.  
Quoniam  
interdum,  
ut noſtris  
etiam  
tempori-  
bus, inter-  
rupto Ec-  
clesiae ſta-  
tu, neceſſe  
fuit, non  
nullos eſſe  
qui Eccle-  
ſiae collap-  
ſe ruinas  
inſtaura-  
rent.

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had reason to look upon the party that adhered to these Prelates with such obstinate stiffness as a Body or Society of which a man could not positively say, *That is the particular Body wherein God nourishes and cherishes his Faithful and Elect.*

IX. Hence likewise it follows, that our Fathers are wrongfully charged with making a Schism, and separating from the Church. For it being sure, that the Church consists of the Faithful only; and besides, that we are of opinion, the *Trent* Bishops themselves broke the band of external Communion with sound Believers, and brought things to such a pass, that our Ancestors could not possibly joyn with them in the same Assemblies; it is evident, They were the Beginners of the Schism, the Authors and makers of this lamentable divition.

X. It signifies nothing to alledg, that they were possest of the Ministry by an exterior and ordinary succession; for the Ministry is not such a thing, as men when once possest of, can never forfeit their right to, tho they abuse it never so much. They enjoyed it by an external succession, 'tis confess; but this succession with respect to mens persons continues no longer than we can say, *The faithful* are under their Ministry. When we cannot be sure of that any more, from thenceforth the Prelates have lost their right; and such a succession afterwards, would be but as the succession of death to a disease, or of night to twilight. I do not say the Ministry it self is extinct, God forbid; but I say in such a case it devolves of right to that other part of the Society where the Faithful are. The reason of which Truth is this: That the Ministers are naturally the Church Representative; And all their Authority is derived from the Body of the Faithful; When therefore it happens that they break the band of external communion which joyns them to those Faithful, it is plain they represent them no longer; and the holding their Authority over them afterwards, is a force and usurpation.

XI. Lastly, From the Principles we have established, it appears, how vain and ungrounded a scandal it is, which the Controvertists of the *Romish* Communion are continually upbraiding us with, of setting up a new Church. For being the Church, according to Scripture, sound *Yense*, and the opinions of the Fathers, is nothing else but the Society of true Believers: To have set up a new Church, we must have brought in a new Faith, different from what Jesus Christ delivered to the World. If they can convict us of being guilty in this point, we are heartily content they should not only say we have formed a new Church, but that we have formed

formed a false, perverse, naughty Society, and draw all the consequences against us, that can be naturally drawn from that Concession. But if we on the contrary have only rejected new Doctrines, a worship that Christian Religion never was acquainted with; and Errors brought into the Church since it was first established; if we have only refined the Ministry, and restored the Gospel to its natural lustre, they ought to be just in acknowledgment, that God hath made use of us, for the preservation of his true, Ancient, Primitive Church, and the rescuing it from oppression. If it be true, that the *Trent* Council have made Articles of Faith of such Doctrines and Practices as were never revealed to us by Christ, may we not say that That hath set up a new Religion, and consequently a new Church? Let us judge of one another by this Rule of right reason, and conscientiously examine the truth of what hath been done on both sides; for upon such an examination the justice or injustice of taxing us with Novelty, will depend.

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I THE



THE  
SECOND PART  
OF  
Monsieur de CONDOM's Discourse  
EXAMINED.

**T**HUS much I thought fit to say in Answer to the First part of *M. de Condom's Discourse*; The Second will not detain us very long. *They made me ( says he ) some Objections concerning the frequent revolts of the people of Israel, who had so often forsaken God, the Kings, and all the people, as the Holy Scripture speaks ; during which, the publick worship was so extinct, that Elijah thought himself the only servant of God, till he learnt from God himself, that he had referred to himself seven thousand men which had not bowed the knee unto Baal.* *To this I answer'd ( proceeds he ) that for what regarded Elijah, there was no difficulty, since 'twas apparent from the very words, that it concern'd only Israel, where Elijah prophesied ; and that the Divine Worship was so far from being at that time extinct in Judah, that 'twas there under the reign of Josaphat in the greatest lustre it had been since Solomon's time.*

I shall not say here, that the Divine Worship under the reign of *Josaphat*, was not in such great lustre neither, but that the Scripture informs us, *The high places were not taken away ; for the people offered still, and burnt incense in the high places*, which was a worship forbidden by God. But not to insist upon this, I say in the first place, This instance is a very good proof, that the greatest part of this exterior Society, professing themselves to be the people of God, that is, ten tribes out of twelve, were corrupted to that degree, that *Elijah* complain'd he only was left. Which shews, that we must not always conclude Truth and Purity to be of that side where the number is most ; nor suppose it impossible, for what we call the *Visible Church*, to be corrupted, at least as to the greatest part of Professors. Secondly, I could heartily have wisht, that *M. de Condom* would

would have reflected a little upon the use St. *Paul* made of this instance of *Israel* in *Elijah*'s time; because it is exactly the same with what the Protestant Ministers make of it now. It was objected to the Apostle, that from his Principles it would follow, that God had cast away his people, in as much as the whole Body of that people had crucified Jesus Christ, and walked contrary to his new Religion; if therefore he would undertake to maintain his new Religion was the Right, he must at the same time own, that God had forsaken his Church. No, (says he) *God hath not cast away his people, for there is a remnant through the election of Grace*; and hereupon he alledges what happened to *Israel* heretofore in *Elijah*'s time, when God reserved to himself Seven thousand men in secret, that had not bowed the knee to *Baal*. What can be more exactly parallel than the use he makes of this passage, and that the Protestants make? 'Tis objected to us, that from our Principles it follows, God hath cast away his Church, because the whole Body of that Church condemns our Reformation, and walks contrary to our new Religion. *They teach that this visible exterior Church may cease to be upon Earth*, says *M. de Condom*. No such matter, say we, God hath not deserted his Church, there is a remnant according to the Election of Grace, and in proof of this we urge the instance of *Israel* heretofore, in *Elijah*'s time. If to charge the Protestants with unsincerity for alledging this, were at the same time to charge St. *Paul*. If the exception of *Judah*, where the worship in *Elias* his time was in great lustre, were good, and to be admitted against us, the same was also good and to be admitted against the Apostle. For what do we more than he did? or what do we say, but what we have learnt from Him ought to be said in this Case? Let St. *Paul* then acquit himself, and he shall in doing so, acquit us. Now this is done without any difficulty, for he need only Answer, that the exception does not make at all against him. The business is to know, which is the true people of God, his true Church which he never forsakes. Now it is plain by God's answer to *Elijah*, that this is not the Crowd, the vast Number, not the party of greatest strength, or which makes most noise in the World, but some persons reserved, *a remnant according to the election of Grace*, these are his true people, and his true Church. Tho *Judah* had still maintain'd the Divine Worship in its greatest lustre, yet does not this detract from the truth of God's declaration made to *Elias*, viz. that his true people, his true Church consists of this Remnant, or these Persons reserved. This is all St. *Paul* desires; this is likewise all the Protestants desire to make of it. *Lord, says Elijah, they have broken down thine Altars, and slain thy Prophets with the sword, and I only am left*. Had God made his Church to consist in an exterior Body of men, who should preserve his worship in a constant uninterrupted purity, what

Rom 11.  
2, 5.

Confer.  
Page 12.

1 Kings  
19. 14.

what could have been more natural than to return this answer, Wherefore dost thou complain, have I not still my Church in *Judah*? The Cardinal *du Perron* would have replied exactly thus, and from him it is that *M. de Condom* hath borrowed this shift. Yet God answers in a very different manner, he fixes his true Church, not in the exterior Body, but in the Persons he *had reserved*. The Apostle takes the advantage of an Argument against what the Jews in his time objected, and we in like manner take the same advantage against what is objected to us now.

Afterward *M. de Condom* frames to himself an Objection drawn from the Disorders and horrible Corruptions predominant in *Judah* during the Reign of *Abaz*, who shut up the Temple of God, and caused *Urijah* the Priest to sacrifice unto Idols; and afterward under *Minasseh*, whose Impieties transcended those of *Abaz*. To which he answers, first, *That Isaiah, who lived during all the Reign of Ahaz, for all these abominations of the King, of the Priest Urijah, and almost all the People, never separated from the Communion of Judah; which shews, that there is always a People of God, from whose Communion 'tis never lawful to separate.* Laying aside, for one minute the busines of Separation, we must in the mean time of necessity grant, that this exterior Society, called the People of God, were prodigiously corrupted in matters of Faith and Worship, that their Corruption was publick and general, diffused, not among some private Persons only, but through the whole Body of the ordinary Ministry. So that the true Church, that to which the Promises of God belong, that which must not be interrupted, nor totally fail, must be acknowledged to consist, not in the whole Body of this exterior Society, but merely in the Body of true Believers, who it is possible may sometimes be reduced to a very inconsiderable number of this Society, and scarce make any Figure at all in it. We must likewise acknowledge it possible, for such an universal Corruption to happen in this Society, that there shall be no longer any thing perfectly sound and entire in it, that is, nothing in the publick Worship without some tincture of impurity. For at the same time that *Abaz* Reigned in *Judah*, and the Corruption was general there, *Pekah* was King in *Israel*, who (says the Scripture) did evil in the sight of the Lord, and departed not from the sins of *Jeroboam* who made *Israel* to sin. So that the publick Worship was then corrupted every where, as well in *Israel* as *Judah*. What then became of *M. de Condom*'s exterior Church, which he says can never err in her Determinations? Where was then that Church, which does not only maintain some truth, but teaches and maintains all truth? Well, but still *M. de Condom* tells us, *Isaiah never separated from the Communion of this People, no more than did the rest of the Prophets.*

2 King. 16.  
and Ch.  
21.

Confer.  
Page 16.

2 Kings  
15. 28.

Confer.  
Page 16.

Now

Now this very thing strengthens our Argument, and renders it impregnable; because, from hence it necessarily follows, that there was not in any place of the World besides, any publick Worship, nor any Exterior Body at all, little or great, that served God in perfect Purity. So that we must inevitably allow one of these two things; Either that the Church was at that time utterly extinct, or that it was preserved in this Remnant, which we see God spoke of to *Elijah*. The first of these destroys the Promises of God; the second establishes our Opinion, and quite overthrows that of the *Romanists*.

Confer.  
Page 17.

Let us now examine how *Isaiah* and the other Prophets, not separating from the Body of the People, is to be understood. Can we suppose them to have been partakers of the Wickednesses that then prevailed in the publick Worship? By no means. *These Prophets*, M. de Condom says, *reprehended and detested the impieties of the People, but separated not from the Communion*. The meaning of which is, that they separated negatively, tho not positively; they refused to partake of the Impieties in the publick Worship; but they did not set up another sort of publick Worship distinct by themselves: I grant it. But then we must also grant, that when the Worship is corrupted, the Church may subsist by means of such a Negative Separation, and that this is sufficient for its preservation. Now this is exactly what we are of Opinion was done, during the Corruptions of the *Latin Ministry* all along before the Reformation. But still it may be said, These Prophets never proceeded so far as a *positive Separation*, and you have. I answer, The Reason they never separated positively, was peculiar to themselves, as M. de Condom himself acknowledges, to wit, that over and above the real and spiritual Covenant, God had entred into with such as were true Believers among that People; there was besides another Exterior and Temporal one, in which the whole Nation were concern'd, founded upon their being the Blood and Progeny of *Abraham*, and all bearing about them the Mark of this Covenant (to wit, Circumcision) in their Flesh; so that the true Believers were obliged upon this account to continue in Communion with the People, and could not separate from them positively, by reason of that common Covenant which they might not break. But the case is otherwise with the Christian Church, which hath but one Covenant with God, and that a real and spiritual one, of true Faith, and sincere Regeneration; when, therefore we can no longer maintain this Covenant, by living amongst a People, and under a Ministry which is become contrary thereto, there lies a necessity upon us of separating by a *positive Separation*.

And

And yet *M. de Condom* pretends to make some advantage of this very thing. He says, *The Succession of that Ancient People was kept up by carnal Generation,—and so, tho the Priests, and almost all the People should have prevaricated, the State of Gods People subsisted always in an exterior Form, whether they would or no.*—*But 'tis not so with the new People, whose exterior Form consists in nothing but the Profession of Jesus Christ's Doctrine:* So that if the Confession of the true Faith should be extinct for one only moment, the Church, which has no Succession but by the Continuance of this Profession, would be wholly extinct, without any possibility of ever rising again, either in its People or Pastors, but by a new Mission.

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I confess, That carnal Generation was in that Ancient People, enough to keep up their Succession in Quality of Gods People, with Relation to that temporal Covenant common to them all. Tho it be true too, that this Quality was but very imperfectly discerned in times of general Prevarications; because, if they were then Gods *temporal* People, they were a vicious and prevaricating People. But, I say, that carnal Generation was not enough to maintain among them a Succession, with respect to the spiritual Covenant; because the Succession here, could be preserved no other way, but by a Participation of the same Faith, and the same Charity. Now the Covenant in which the new People live, is not any longer a carnal one, but purely and solely Spiritual; and consequently, the Succession in it, can only consist in this perpetual Participation of one and the same Faith, and one and the same Charity. In this particular, the Condition of both old and new People are alike. As therefore in that Ancient People, there did still continue a Succession of Faith and Charity, tho the publick Worship and ordinary Ministry were full of strange Corruptions; in like manner hath such a Succession always continued in the new, even in the midst of all Corruptions. God had then his methods of teaching *the reserved*, and keeping them from partaking in the publick Prevarications; the same he hath still, and useth to the same purpose, altho the Ministry and publick Worship have not preserved their Purity. I confess, should a full and perfect desertion of Christianity ever have happened throughout all the Christian World, and not one true Believer be left upon the face of the Earth, a man might say, the Church had been utterly extinct. But blessed be God, it never came to that. We acknowledg that God hath all along preserved his Remnant, according to the Election of Grace. We acknowledg too, that the publick Ministry was never so totally corrupted, but still all that was necessary for the Instruction of Believers, was so far kept up, that the spiritual Succession was always preserved intire, by receiving from the Ministers hands nourishment sufficient unto spiritual Life on the one hand, and casting away all the

the evil and impure Mixtures of the Ministry on the other hand; and this is that negative Separation we spoke of before. The exterior Form of Jesus Christ's true Church, does not so absolutely consist in the Ministries making profession of Faith pure, and void of Error, that it cannot otherwise subsist any longer. I confess, when this is done, the Church is in a happy Condition, and (if I may so say) a Condition of Health. But when this is not done, the exterior Form does not presently perish upon that account, because this consists in our being able to say, *That is the Body where God nourishes and cherishes his true Believers*, as I have already shewn when treating of my second question. Could we no longer say thus, the Church would have lost its external Form, and its Succession have ceased to be visible. But this might at all times be said, even when the Ministry and publick Worship was most corrupted, and so the Churches visible Succession was never quite-lost. It hath indeed been mightily lessened and obscured, in Proportion to the Errors that prevailed in the Ministry; and this was the Churches Condition of Misery, it's sick and languishing Condition, which nevertheless went not so far, as to hinder this Succession.

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*M. de Condom goes on. I will not say the true Faith, and true Worship of God, could be wholly abolished in the People of Israel, so as that God had no more any true Servants on Earth. But I find on the contrary, 'tis clear, that maugre the Corruption, God still reserved to himself a sufficient number of Servants, who participated not in the Idolatry.* Hérein we agree; for neither do we say, That the true Faith, and true Worship could ever have been wholly abolished among Christians; but on the contrary, that maugre the Corruption, God hath always reserved to himself a sufficient number of Servants, who have not participated in the Prevarications of the rest. So far the case is the same. *'Tis not to be imagined, proceeds he, that Gods Servants, and the true Faith, were preserved only in secret; but that in all the Succession of the Ancient People, the true Doctrine always shone forth.* For there was a continual Succession of Prophets, who instead of adhering to the Peoples Errors, or dissembling them, rose up against them with force; and this Succession was so constant, that the Holy Ghost fears not to say, *That God rose up Night and Morning, and daily admonished the People by the Mouth of his Prophets.*

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18.

2 Chron.

36. 15.

Jer. 11. 7.

xxv. 3, 4.

*M. de Condom* must give us leave to make some Observations upon this Passage. The first of which is, that in the Corruptions of *Israel* heretofore, when the publick Worship, and ordinary Ministry, suffered such Depravation, there was not any where in the World another publick Worship, or another Ministry, that was preserved in Purity and Perfection: So that if men must needs have lookt for the Church in the Body

Body of the Peoples living under their ordinary Pastors, and in the publick worship (as he is of opinion we now must under the Gospel) there could not have been any longer a Church upon Earth; because his own Principle maintains that, *if this visible and exterior Church composed of Pastors and People, do not keep and teach all truth, (that is, if She teach any thing that is false) She is not the Church.*

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I observe, secondly, That in the very same place, where God is said to rise up Night and Morning, and daily admonish the People by the Mouth of his Prophets; it is also said, That *all the chief of the Priests, and the People trespassed wonderfully, according to all the Abominations of the Heathen, and polluted the House of the Lord, which he had sanctified in Jerusalem.* It is said further too, *That they mocked the Messengers of God, and despised his Words, and misused his Prophets.* Which shews that both People and Priests were generally corrupted, and the Church reduced to a Remnant. I confess, some certain Persons of this Remnant did not keep silence; but instead of adhering to, or dissembling the Peoples Errors, opposed them strongly. But besides, that a great many more, no question, sighed in secret for these things; it is manifest, that this Remnant did not make a separate Body by themselves, nor exercise any publick Worship different from the rest. And consequently the Churches visibility, tho not wholly extinct, yet was mightily darkned and diminished, and that is all we would infer from hence.

2 Chron.  
36. 14, 16.

My third Observation is, That there was indeed, in that Ancient People, a continued Succession of Prophets; and as M. de Condom says, a *Propheticall Ministry ordinary with the People, where the Prophets made an Order always subsisting, whence God continually drew Divine Men, by whose Mouth he spake loudly and publickly to all his People.* But then we must say withal, that the Body of this Order of Prophets were every whit as corrupt, as the Priests and People. This cannot be denied, for the Scripture affirms it expressly. *The Priests said not, where is the Lord; and they that should Minister the Law knew me not; the Pastors also offended against me, and the Prophets prophesied in Baal.* *The Prophets prophesie lies, and the Priests bear rule by their means, and my People love to have it so.* I have heard what the Prophets said, that *Prophesie lies in my Name, saying, I have dreamed. How long shall this be in the hearts of the Prophets, that Prophesie lies? Yea, they are Prophets of the deceit of their own heart.* *Which think to cause my People to forget my Name by their Dreams, which they tell every Man to his Neighbour, as their Fathers have forgotten my Name for Baal.* And a vast number of Passages to the like purpose. So that we cannot say, there was at that time any visible Body that opposed the Corruptions, or maintained the Worship of God in its genuine Purity. The Prophets, by whom God spake so

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*An Answer to M. de Condom's*

loudly and publickly, were only lookt upon as private Persons, of an Opinion different from the generality of the Society. And therefore, how loudly and publickly soever they spoke, if in order to the constituting a Visible Church, it be necessary to find a Body or Society of Men, making Profession of pure Doctrine, *M. de Condom* must acknowledg, that there was not then any Visible Church in the World.

And now, *Sir*, give me leave, I beseech you, to ask, with what pretence to Reason men can still cavil at this instance of the Corruptions in *Israel* heretofore, and not own it for a sensible Proof, that confirms most of the Truths established in the former part of this Letter. An it you see, the several Bodies that made up the ordinary Ministry, all of them ensnared in Idolatry, and false Worship. In it you see the whole Body of the People blindly following the exorbitancies of their Guides. In it you see the true Church of God subsisting, not in an exterior Society, enjoying its Ministers, Assemblies, and publick Worship peculiar to its self; but in some *reserved* Persons, that still maintained their Integrity in the midst of all these Confusions. In it you see God himself, and after him, *St. Paul*, making his true People to consist in these Persons so *reserved*. All this proves, and proclaims to the World, That the true Church consists of true Believers only; That this Church is not otherwife visible, but as mixt with wicked Men and Reprobates; That this mixture does sometimes so obscure it, that it is very difficult to come to a knowledg of it; That it does nevertheless still subsist even in that state of obscurity; And, that in these true Believers, and *Persons whom God has reserved*, he does fulfil the Promises of Perpetuity made to the Church.

I close this Letter with sincere Protestations, That it is much to my dissatisfaction, that I find my self obliged to put Pen to paper, in a Dispute against *M. de Condom*. I have all along had, and ever shall have, not only all the Respect for him, which is due to his Quality and Station; but more especially, I esteem his Virtue so universally acknowledged, and admire his Perfections, and the excellent Gifts God hath imparted to him, as they really deserve. In our Conference, I observed in him, a Wit lively and piercing, a clear Apprehension, a proper and easy way of Expression; and especially, an extraordinary Candour and Civility of Behaviour. He maintain'd his Principles with all the strength and advantage imaginable, made them look as fair and specious, as it was possible for any man, and managed them with abundance of Skill and Address. In a word, I was strangely taken with the Accomplishments of his Person, and did often feel such kind Inclinations and Wishes, as Men should do upon such Occasions. My Sentiments of Honour and Respect for him are sincere, but the more they

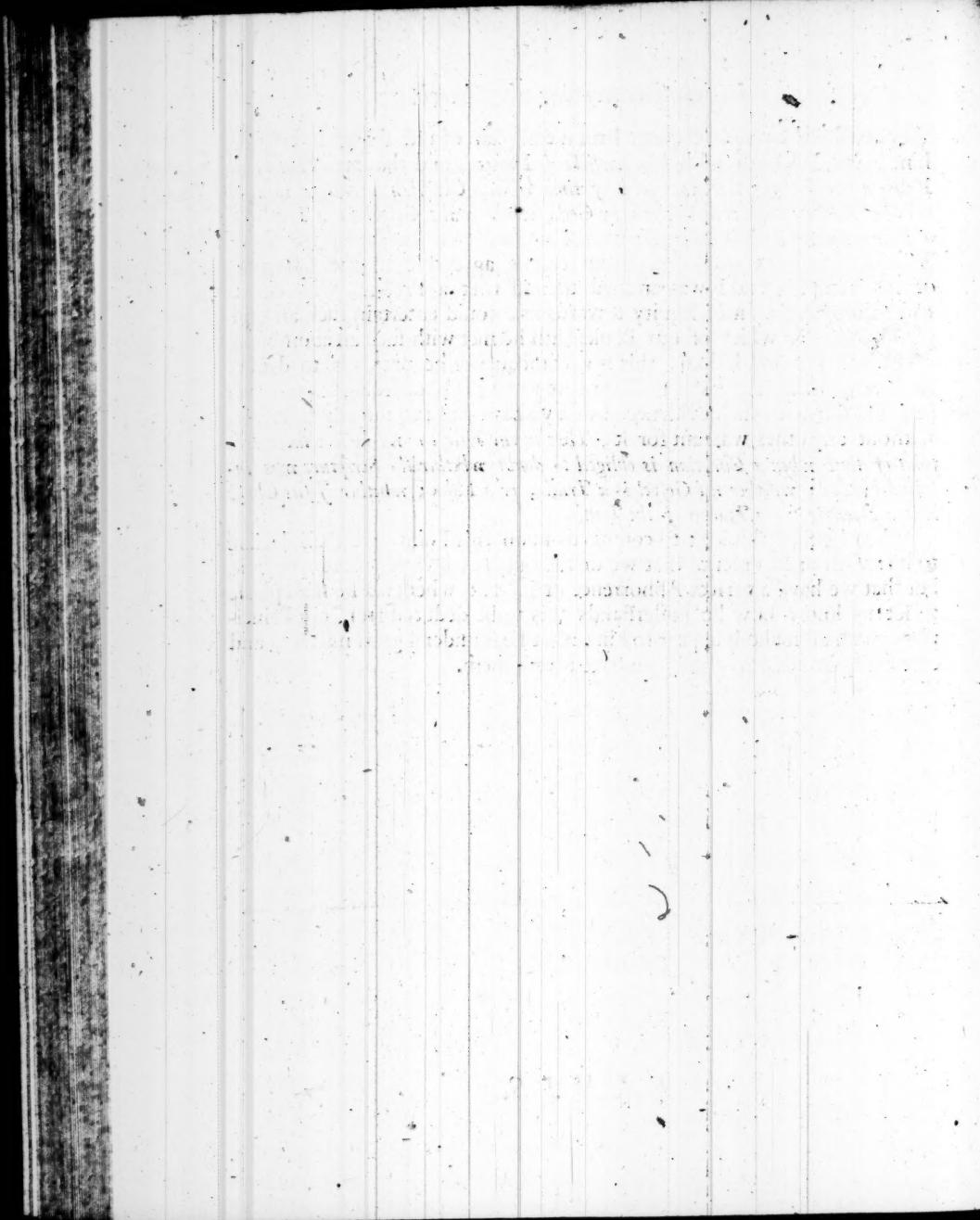
they are so, the more frequent I must complain of one thing, inserted by him in his Discourse with *Mademoiselle de Duras*, and that is, *That in our Religion we believe, there is a point of time when a Christian is obliged to doubt whether the Scripture was inspired by God, whether the Gospel is a Truth, or a Fable; whether Jesus Christ was a Deceiver, or a Teacher of the Truth.* This Discourse, I confess, was by no means agreeable to the Character of his Temper; and I was amazed to find that a Prelate, who desires to be thought a man of Equity towards us, could entertain such an Opinion of us. In which of our Books hath he met with such an abominable Doctrine? I know indeed, this is a consequence he pretends to deduce from our Principles; but I shall venture to say, His consequence can never be made out with such evidence, as may allow him peremptorily to affirm, without any other warrant for it, *That in our Religion we believe there is a point of time when a Christian is obliged to doubt whether the Scripture was inspired by God; whether the Gospel is a Truth, or a Fable; whether Jesus Christ was a Deceiver, or a Teacher of the Truth.*

When he shall think fit to consult us upon this Point, we shall declare to him with one Consent, that we do not only not believe this Proposition, but that we have a perfect Abhorrence of it; and whenever he shall please to let us know how he understands this to be deduced from our Principles, we shall make it appear to him, that he is under a great mistake, and that the quite contrary must be inferred from them.

*I am, Sir, &c.*

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*F I N I S.*



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A N  
A N S W E R  
T O  
*M. de M E A U X's B O O K.*  
ENTITULED,  
*A Conference with Mr. CLAUDE.*

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*A Relation of what past in the Conference held by the Bishop of Condom, Preceptor to the Dauphin; and Monsieur Claude, the first of March, 1678. At the Countess of Roye's House, the Countesses of Lorge, and Roye, Mademoiselle de Duras, the Marques of Miremont, Mademoiselle de Roucy, and Mr. Cotton, being there present.*

**S**OME Days before this Conference, Mademoiselle de Duras going to visit Mr. Claude, let him know, that she was under some scruples upon the account of her Religion, and took out of her pocket a Paper lately put into her hands, in which were contained some Passages out of St. Augustine concerning the Eucharist: To which Mr. Claude replyed, and then by other Passages of the same Father, demonstrated to her, that his opinion as to this particular, was directly the same that is taught at Charenton: And thereupon she seemed to be well satisfied.

The next Day after Mr. Claude seeing her at the Countess of Roye's, she after a long Discourse told him, that she was mighty desirous he would admit of a Conference with some Doctor of the Romish Persw-

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sion at a time when she might be by. Mr. *Claude* returned, that this was not usual; that such Conferences might be of very ill consequence, and that she could not but be sensible that the present Circumstances of the Reformed in *France*, and especially at *Paris*, required they should behave themselves with much prudence and caution. But (says she) how would you behave your self if you should light upon one of these Gentlemen accidentally, and be put upon matters of Religion? You would not desert your Cause? I would in such a case, says Mr. *Claude*, decline entering into Disputes as much as I could; but if I were constrained to it, I would give an account of my Faith; and upon such sudden occasions we are not used to run away. But Madam (proceeded he) what reason is there for asking me this? We are not going about any such thing.

Two Days after the Countess of *Roye* told Mr. *Claude*, she understood there were some pains taken to procure a meeting that should seem accidental between him and *M. de Condom*, and she thought it convenient to give him this notice. Were I desirous to meet any man (said he) I had rather it should be *M. de Condom* than another, because he is a Person of Wisdom, Honour, and Judgment, and one for whom I have a particular Respect and Esteem; but in regard of the Publick Capacity I am in, methinks this business deserves some Consideration. A little while after he imparted it to two of his Friends, and all three together paying a Visit to a Person of Quality of extraordinary Merit and great Prudence, it was generally agreed, that Mr. *Claude*'s best way was to decline this meeting with *M. de Condom*. The Reasons alledged were these, That it was already known Mademoiselle de *Duras* was perfectly disposed to alter her Religion; that in all probability she desired a Conference only for the greater Pomp and formality of the thing, and to make use of this as a pretence; that let the issue be what it would, she would most certainly go over, and pretend it had not given her satisfaction, and that this would certainly be a piece of the next publick News.

The Person of Quality whose advice was asked, undertook to Visit the Countess of *Roye*, and make her sensible of these Reasons. She indeed shewed her self apprehensive of them, and easily saw their strength and drift. But all that could be done was too weak to bring Mademoiselle de *Duras* off from her first Design. The Lady complained extremely of her being deserted, and that this was the very thing she had often been upbraided with, that the Reformed Ministers durst not shew their heads before the Catholick Doctors. By this, and the addition of Tears too, she endeavoured all manner of ways to move her

her Sister, solemnly protesting, that, did but People know what a world of good this would do her, they could not certainly deny her so great an act of Charity.

This engaged the Countess of *Roye* to concern her self for the bringing about a meeting between *Monsieur de Condom* and *Mr. Claude*, and she did it so very well, that *Mr. Claude* found himself under a necessity of consenting to it, that so he might not expose himself to the insolence of those of a different persuasion. She assured him *M. de Condom* desired this meeting should seem merely by chance, that the World should not be acquainted with it, and that they should not make it their business to talk of it on one side nor other.

On *Tuesday* the first day of *March*, about two in the *Afternoon*, *Mr. Claude* went all alone to the Countess of *Roye's*, and a little after came in the *Mareschall de Lorge*, *Mademoiselle de Duras*, the *Marques of Miremont*, and *Mr. Cotton*. About a quarter of an hour after, came in *M. de Condom* by himself.

When the first Complements were paid, and the Company had taken their Seats, *M. de Condom* directed himself to *Mr. Claude*, and told him, That he had for some time longed to see him to offer some things which were practised by men of his Religion, but such as he apprehended to be directly contrary to their Principles. That these consisted, first in an Article of their Discipline, which enjoyns, that in case any difference arise in points of *Doctrine*, the *Question* shall be decided in the *Consistory*, and by the *Word of God*: If they do not *acquiesce* in the Judgment of this Court, it shall be referred to a *Provincial Synod*, and from thence to a *National Synod*, where a full and final resolution of the case shall be given by the *Word of God*; and such as refuse to submit to this, shall be *excommunicated*. Secondly, he produced a *formulary* of a *Letter Missive* to the *National Synods*, framed in the *Synod of Vitre*, and which was to be a pattern for all the Provinces to follow for the future, by which they promise *submission to all the resolutions of that holy Assembly, to obey and execute every particular of them, as being persuaded (says the Formulary) that God will preside there, and lead you into all truth and equity by his Holy Spirit, and by the Rule of his Word*. Besides that, he produced an *Act* of the *National Synod* held at *Charenton* in the Year 1644. where the *Independents* opinion is condemned, who will not allow that particular *Congregations* should depend upon the *Authority* of *Colloquies* and *Synods*, but that every one should be governed by *Laws* within it self. Now this *Act* expressly declares, that that *Sect* opens a door to all manner of *irregularities and extravagances*, that it deprives men of all means of remedying disorders,

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and would, if admitted, make as many several Religions, as Parishes. Lastly, he produced an Act of the National Synod at *Sainte-foy*, by which, upon occasion of some overtures for a re-union with those of the *Ausburg* Confession, the Synod assigns Deputies to go and confer with them; to whom full power is granted, to agree upon, and determine whatever points should be debated, whether in matters of Doctrine, or any other thing that might concern the Good and Peace of all the Churches, even so far as to consent, that their Decisions should be inserted in their Confessions of Faith. From all which he inferred, That even those of Mr. *Claude's* Religion, did acknowledg a necessity, that in order to the preservation of Unity in the Church, men should submit their Judgments, and pay an entire and absolute obedience to Ecclesiastical Assemblies, without leaving themselves at liberty to examine their determinations, or judg whether they were agreeable to the Word of God or no; and that upon refusal of this Obedience, it was just to proceed to Excommunication. That this was exactly what the Church of *Rome* would have, and that she desired no more; But that we nevertheless in our disputes with her, advance a quite contrary Principle. He therefore entreated from Mr. *Claude* a distinct answer to this Point, and would quietly hear what he could say to it. Adding moreover, that Mr. *Claude* ought to be the more ready to reply upon this subject, because no new thing was proposed to him, the same Acts, and the same consequences that he now deduced from them, being to be found in his Exposition of the Catholick Doctrine.

Mr. *Claude* first of all replied, That although his coming thither was not with intentions to hold a Conference strictly, and by rule, yet he was extreamly glad that he had now an opportunity given him, of testifying to *M. de Condom* how much he esteemed his person; and that having no particular worth of his own, he thought it a great honour, that a Prelate of *M. de Condom's* Character should single him out, to engage in Controversy with him. That he would endeavour to give him satisfaction in each of the points now propounded to him; and that, if in the following part of the Discourse any expression should escape from him which might be offensive to *M. de Condom*, he protest-ed before-hand, that it should be much against his will and desig-n.

To this *M. de Condom* replied in very civil and obliging terms; and Mr. *Claude* then resuming the discourse, told him; That in general, whatever he had alledged just before, did by no means infer such a blind and entire submission to the determinations of Ecclesiastical Assemblies, as the Church of *Rome* pretends to impose; That we must distinguish between two sorts of Authorities, the one supream and unli-mited;

mited ; the other limited and depending ; to the former we owe a full and perfect obedience ; to the other a conditional one only. The former *M. de Condom* was sensible, is by the *Protestants* attributed to God alone, speaking to us in the Holy Scriptures ; and that the second was it they allowed the Pastors of the Church, considered either single and by themselves, or met together in a Synod or Council. That their Authority, being only Ministerial, is restrained two ways ; one is, That they must frame their decisions, not of their own heads, nor after their own fancies, but according to the Word of God ; the other, That they must always allow the persons under their Jurisdiction the priviledg of examining those decisions, that so they may know, whether they be really agreeable to God's Word : Whence it follows, that the obedience due to them ever goes upon this condition, that they have not swerved from the Word of God ; That the Authority of Pastors, and Assemblies composed of such, cannot extend further, than that of our Parliaments in the State of *France*, who are not empowered to alter old Laws, and enact new ones ; and whom we are privileged, nay, obliged to disobey, so oft as their Injunctions are prejudicial to the King's Service, and the Allegiance we owe him : That the Authority of Church-Assemblies can at most be, but as that of Fathers over Children, because both God and Nature have invested Fathers with it ; The Fathers have a right to Act in their Childrens names, because they have a right of Educating and Commanding them ; and the Scripture frequently enjoyns to Children, a readines to learn, and obedience to their Fathers ; yet does it not follow from hence, that Children are not privileged and obliged to examine their Fathers Instructions and Commands, whether they be true or false, just or unjust, and what shall appear to be false and unjust, that to reject. That nevertheless the Authority of Pastors and their Assemblies, is really very great, as is likewise that of Parliaments and Fathers, notwithstanding their Authorities are under some limitations. That the Pastors are as publick Trustees for the keeping God's Word, appointed to study, and meditate upon it continually, thence to deduce necessary truths for the peoples improvement, and to save private men a labour, which they cannot always attend to, because diverted and perplexed by the busines of the World. That so long as the Pastors discharged this Duty well, the people were obliged to obey and submit to their words ; but when they deviated from it, they were to be looked upon as false and treacherous persons.

Afterwards he came particularly to those Acts *M. de Condom* had urged, and told him ; That the Clause of Submission contain'd in the

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Letters Missive to National Synods, must be understood according to this Principle, and under these Limitations, because grounded upon this Supposal, That all things would be managed there according to God's Word. For those expressions, *Being perswaded, that God will preside among you, and lead you into all Truth by his Holy Spirit, and by the rule of his Word,* do imply a perswasion of Charity and Equity; for we ought always to presume the best of such Assemblies, and hope that God will preside over them, and that they will acquit themselves of their duty, till experience shews the contrary: But all this does not imply so entire a submission, as for a Man to deprive himself of all right to examine their Resolutions. As to that Act which condemns the Independents, it is (said he) extreamly Just. For tho' Assemblies do not arrive at an Infallibility, yet are not they presently to be utterly abolished. 'Tis a human Order indeed, but yet such an Order as God himself hath settled for the preservation of his Church, and to desert it therefore is criminal. And yet we do not think it follows from hence, that the determinations of the Assemblies exact a blind and implicit Obedience; nor that the Synod of *Charenton* intended any such thing. And then for the Synod at *Saintes* deputing four persons to confer with those of the *Ausburg* Confession, and the full power given them, you can make no advantage of it. For those Deputies were in the nature of Ambassadors, who are sent by the King with full Commission to offer Proposals, hold Treaties, and agree upon Conclusions; or as Plenipotentiaries sent to negotiate a Peace. Let their power be never so full, or call them Plenipotentiaries as long as you please, still this condition is constantly and naturally understood, that they do nothing against the interest of the persons that commissioned them, and to these their Acts must of necessity return, for the obtaining their approbation and ratification, without which their Treaties would signify nothing at all. And this was the meaning of that full power conferr'd by the Synod upon their Deputies, to hear those of the Confession of *Ausburg*, to hearken to their Proposals, their Complaints, their Offers, and in return to make others to them; to receive from them Explications of difficulties in Controversy, and to give them back theirs; nay, to come to an agreement with them if they could, yet not so, as either to become absolute Masters of their Faith, or blindly receive whatever they should agree upon. For in all affairs of this kind, there is naturally implied, a Clause of recurring to the Judgment of the persons Commissioning, and a necessity of their ratifying them. Mr. *Claude* added besides, this Consideration. Suppose the true sense of an Act of the Church of *Rome* were called in Question, (a Canon of the Council

cif of Trent for instance) *M. de Condom* would think it more reasonable, that the sense should be taken from him than Mr. *Claude*, because the Question is put concerning the sense of a Church that *M. de Condom* is a Member of, and therefore in all probability he must understand it better than one of another Church. Therefore, Sir, said he, I expect the same Justice from you, in taking the sense of these Acts now in Dispute from me, provided the sense I put upon them do not disagree with the Doctors of my Communion, or be not manifestly false, and contradictory to the rest of our Principles. Now if the sense I put upon these Acts be not any of these, you have not, in my opinion, any right to refuse it, or to frame to your self any other different from it.

*M. de Condom* replied, saying, that he would begin where Mr. *Claude* left off, because that what he had urged just before, carried some appearance of Truth, and made a quick impression upon the mind, but had not really any thing of solid Argument in it. That, were the matter in hand any Explication of their particular Rites and Ceremonies, in Preaching the Word, and Administiring the Sacraments, what Mr. *Claude* said might be allowed for Truth, and in that point he would believe him, as a person better acquainted with the matter; Nay, that he did not go about to debar him the liberty of explaining the sense of those that compiled the Discipline and the forementioned Acts after his own way; That he was sensible they denied an entire submission to the Church, and such as precludes all Examination; But this he would say, that the very men who denied this absolute submission in Speculation, were forced to own and establish it in their practice. That so they contradicted themselves, and that this was the thing he pretended to prove, and in which he was by no means bound to believe Mr *Claude*. For if the matter in hand now, were to demonstrate any Contradictions in the opinions of the Catholick Church, he would not desire that His Explications might be thought of Authority sufficient, nor deny Mr. *Claude* the freedom of making what inferences he thought fit from the Council's own words.

*M. de Condom* stopping there, Mr. *Claude* replied, That, since it was evident, that the persons who made those Acts, denied any submission was due to the determinations of Church-Assemblies, without any Examination at all, the advantage was thus far at least on his side, that *M. de Condom* himself had acknowledged, His Explanation of those Acts was agreeable with the Principles of the Protestants which made them, so that there was more reason for his accepting that sense, than for the framing to himself another, and such a one as contradicted these Principles; That, supposing the business in Controversy to be an Act of the

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Romish Church, he should not scruple to admit *M. de Condom's* explanation, provided the words of the Act did not oppose it, and in that case he might be allowed to infer a Contradiction. That if *M. de Condom* would proceed thus, as to the Acts before urged, he should be glad to see what grounds he had for this pretended Contradiction.

*M. de Condom* said, this would easily be made appear. That he would show this Contradiction with relation to their Discipline, which on one side ordains, That differences in Doctrine should be decided in the Consistory by the Word of God; that it was also her meaning, that this decision was made by the Word of God in the Provincial Synod, as well as the National; and yet on the other side, if men do not acquiesce in the determination of a Consistory, or a Provincial Synod, it orders, things should continue as they were till a National one be convened; *in which it says, a full and final resolution shall be given by the Word of God, and if they submit not to this, they shall be cut off from the Church.* Whence it is evident, that the submission required to a National Synod, was not founded on the Word of God, considered abstractedly as such, because both Consistory and Provincial Synod were supposed to determine by the Word of God, and yet an Appeal from them was allow'd; But that it was founded on the Word of God, so far forth, as That was explained and interpreted by the last judgment of the Church; that is, because this is the last and final resolution; and consequently upon the Authority of the Assembly, considered by it self. Now this, said he, evidently contradicts that Principle, which denies there is an absolute submission due to the sentence of the Church. Of this the Discipline it self was a confirmation, in that it appointed no Excommunication for such as stood out against the determinations of a Consistory and Provincial Synod, and yet did, for such as refused to submit to the decrees of a National one.

The same (proceeded he) is plain from that Letter Missive to the National Synod. For how can men promise and swear submission to whatever should be agreed upon, and yet not suppose a full and perfect Submission owing to the Church? To urge, this Submission proceeds from a persuasion, that God will preside in it by his Spirit, and his Word; and to swear upon this account, is to urge, that this persuasion is grounded upon God's express Promise, to direct his Church in her last determination, by his Holy Spirit, and after an Infallible manner. This very thing, said he, is plain from the National Synod of Charenton's Act against the Independents. The Reason they make use of, that suffering their Principle to take place, might produce as many several Religions as Parishes, concludes for an absolute Obedience

ence to the decisions of Synods; since allowing private persons to examine the last determinations, there might spring not only as many several Religions as Parishes, but as many as there are persons, and consequently no means would be left for preserving the unity either of the Faith, or of the Church.

For what relates to the Deputies nominated by the Synod of *Sainte-foy*, to go and confer with those of the *Ausburg Confession*; he said, he did sincerely acknowledg, that the Synod, tho it gave them never so large a commission, did not however intend it should ever be in their power to subvert all, and if I may so say, to turn things topsy turvy; That he believed the Synods meaning was really, that whatever was done by the Deputies should be referred to them, and that there is a necessity all things of this nature should be ratified. But still it was very amazing, and a thing which Mr. *Claude* had not answered to, that they should proffer to insert their Deputies conclusions with the *Lutherans*, in their publick Confessions of Faith. For this argued them doubting as to their Confession of Faith, which yet, they tell us, contains nothing but the pure Word of God, and in that there can be nothing that requires a change, &c. Do you think Sir said he, that the Articles of your Confession of Faith may be changed?

When *M. de Condom* had left off speaking, Mr. *Claude* said, he would answer to each particular of his discourse, and intreated he would please to hear him quietly. And first of all he said, That *M. de Condom* put a wrong construction upon that Article of the Discipline, which declares, that if men do not acquiesce in the decisions of a Consistory, nor those of a Provincial Synod, *Things shall continue in the same posture, till a National one be convened, in which a full and final resolution shall be given by the Word of God; and they who refuse to acquiesce in This, shall be cut off from the Church.* For the reason of This, said he, is not, either that there ought not to be the same care taken, that the Consistories, or Provincial Synods determinations should be made by the word of God, as well as those of the National; nor that this Word hath not as much Authority at one time as another, whether declared in a Consistory, or Provincial Synod, or a National one; nor that a full and perfect obedience is not due to this only, precisely considered as such: But this method of proceeding (added he) was constituted for two reasons, very different from what you pretend. First, because it is highly probable, that the search made into Gods Word concerning the matter in controversy, may be less exact and sagacious in a Consistory, than it would in a Synod composed of all the Ministers in a whole Province; and so again by the same reason, less exact and sagacious in a

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Provincial Synod, than in a National; which is usually made up of all the most ingenious and learned men in the Kingdom. The other Reason is, That men may possibly be prepossess'd against a Consistory, so as not to hearken to it so readily and impartially as they should; which is not so likely in respect of a Provincial Synod, which will be thought less apt to be sway'd by interest, passions or personal prejudices, and consequently they will be more quietly heard; Lastly, these kind of passions and private Interests being still less likely to happen in a National Synod, consisting of persons living remote from one another, and coming from all quarters of the Kingdom, 'tis very probable men will not be prepossess'd against them, and consequently, that they will receive the Word of God at their mouths, that they will be more ready to learn, and better disposed to obey them. He said therefore, that this method was taken for the avoiding as much as was possible two inconveniences; one was to prevent the last determinations being given lightly, inconsiderately, or with any mixture of humane passion and Interests. The other, that the parties concerned might not be hindred by any personal prejudices, from hearing and receiving the Word of God, with that obedience and faithful submission which is owing to it. But it could by no means be infer'd from hence, that, according to the meaning and intention of the Discipline, it was not always God's Word, as such, but the Authority of the Assembly, to which that Obedience must be paid. And moreover, that the decision of a National Synod, was for this reason called, *the last and final decision*, because according to humane methods, and the present course of things, there is nothing beyond it, to which we can have recourse.

As for the Letter of Mission to the National Synods, he replied, that did not infer an absolute submission, any more than the A&C of their Discipline did, because there was in it the express condition of Judging according to the Word of God, in these words, *Being persuaded, as we are, that God will preside over you, by his Holy Spirit, and his Word.*

As to the Reason which the Synod of Charenton urged against the *Independents*, this, he said, did not at all imply a blind and implicit obedience. That the dependence which particular Churches have upon Colloquies and Synods was an external Order, which, tho' it had not any sure and infallible means of preserving the Church in the unity of the Faith, was however of mighty convenience and use towards the doing it: And we ought always to take it for granted, that God's Blessing will go along with it, as being an order constituted by himself. That the *Independents* by throwing off this Order, do deprive themselves of these means, and wilfully expose themselves to the great inconvenience of

of having as many several Religions as Parishes ; so that the Synod had good grounds for upbraiding them with it, as they did. That the Protestants principles were not liable to the same objection, who though they disown a blind obedience, and entire submission, do yet retain such external means as are most proper and expedient, for preserving the unity of the Faith. And whereas *M. de Condom* pretended, that without entire obedience, it was possible, that as many several Religions might start up as there are Parishes ; 'tis confess, this may come to pass, if we speak with respect to men only, notwithstanding the Order and Ecclesiastical Assemblies be kept up, because the mind of man is of its self subject to infinite Errors. But in respect of God, this cannot fall out so, for he, by his blessing on this external Order, and the Communication of one and the same spirit to his true Believers and Elect, does by this sure and infallible means preserve them in the unity of the same Faith, and consequently of the same Church. That Faith being not an humane, but a Divine thing, none but God alone can either produce, or preserve it in mens hearts. And this he infallibly does in the hearts of his Elect, by his Spirit, and such external means of the Ministry, as himself hath appointed ; *For Paul planteth, and Apollo watereth, 1 Cor. 36. but God giveth the increase.*

Next he came to speak of the Deputies nominated by the Synod of *Sainte-foy*, to confer with the *Lutherans* ; and said, That he was extreamly pleased, with what *M. de Condom* had confess even now, *That they never intended to give them a power of turning all things topsy turvey*, as he had ingeniously exprest it ; but that recourse must be had to the persons commissioning, and their ratification obtained. That he very humbly thankt him for this sincere acknowledgment, which, as to this particular, resolved the whole Question, so that this Act could not now be alledged any more, for the blind obedience pretended to be infer'd from it. That besides this, his accusation against the Synod, for consenting to change their Confession of Faith, if taken in *M. de Condom's* sense, vanished into nothing : For there ought a distinction to be made, between what is essential in it, and what is not. The essential part of the Confession consists in the things themselves, called Articles, or points of Faith ; and that which is not essential consists in the terms and modes of expression. That the Synod had Authority to consent, that the expressions in the Confession should be altered, that other things might be inserted which might illustrate and explain it, if this appeared to be useful, for the reducing men that had deviated from it : But the Synod never took upon them to alter any essential part of the Confession, for it continues in this respect unalterable, so far forth as it is agreeable to the Word of God.

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Mr. *Claude* concluding his discourse, *M. de Condom* replied in the first place, that, notwithstanding what Mr. *Claude* said a little before, concerning the Order observed by the Discipline, it did however enjoy, that such as refused to acquiesce in the decisions of a National Synod, should be cut off from the Church ; and that the Synod of *Dort* had actually cut off the *Arminians* ; he desired therefore to know of Mr. *Claude* whether they were justly and lawfully cut off. Mr. *Claude* answered, that in his opinion the Synod of *Dorts* proceedings were very just. *M. de Condom* told him, This was all the Church of *Rome* desired ; that she also acknowledged her self under an Obligation to judg according to the word of God, but this was not the matter in dispute. The main business was about the Sense and Explanation of that word, and that it was the Churches Province to give this Explanation, and private men's to rest satisfied with it ; and if they did not, the Church dealt justly in excommunicating them. That it was thus the Protestants had been excommunicated in the Council of *Trent*.

As concerning the Letter of Mission to the National Synods, is it not (said he) a plain trick to swear Submission to them upon supposal or condition, that their Determinations shall be agreeable to Gods word ? This is all mere trifling. What say you to it, Sir ? Mr. *Claude* said, there was no trick at all, and he could discover nothing that was irregular in it. If I have a right notion of your Doctrine, replied *M. de Condom*, you hold, that a private Person may doubt of the Judgment of the Church, even when given in its last and highest Court of Jurisdiction. We do hold, said Mr. *Claude*, that no man can have an absolute certainty of Faith, that an Ecclesiastical Assembly shall give right Determinations, and upon this account that men may be allow'd to doubt. But withal, that men should notwithstanding, presume in favour of such an Assembly, and in this respect we cannot properly call it doubting, as hoping, and believing that it will judg a right. For Jesus Christ hath promised, all that seek shall find, and we ought to take it for granted, that they will discharge their duty in seeking aright, till Experience shews the contrary. There is therefore, an assurance of Charity and Equity, that in some Sense excludes doubt. But when we see Assemblies governed by Factions, Cabals, and temporal Interests, then sure we have a great deal of reason to doubt ; as seeing men that have forsaken their Duty, and consequently are such, as cannot hope for any advantage from the blessing of God upon them. Let me beg of you Sir, said *M. de Condom* then, That we may let alone what is good for nothing, but to cast dust in our Eyes. What you said just now of Cabals and Factions, and private Interests, is of no use in the World, and only serves

serves to perplex the matter. I would know of you, put the case there appeared nothing at all of Factions, Cabals, nor Interest in an Assembly; but that all their proceedings were orderly, and regular; whether its Decisions ought to be received without examining them? No Sir, said Mr. Claude. Why then Sir, said he, I was in the right, to tell you that all your talk of Factions and Cabals signifies nothing. That does not follow neither (repli'd Mr. Claude) for notwithstanding there appear not any thing to weaken a mans Presumptions, that the Assembly will discharge their duty faithfully; and that for ought we can discover to the contrary, all things are carried regularly; yet, still this is no more than a humane Presumption, not able to give any certainty of belief, and consequently not precluding our Examination. But when we see Disorder and Corruption manifestly prevail in an Assembly, we can no longer presume in favour of such a one, and instead of hoping the best, we must fear the worst that can come from it. So that it is not without ground, that I spoke of Cabals and Factions. Here *M. de Condom* resuming the former method of his Discourse, said, It was false that the Independents did absolutely throw off all Ecclesiastical Assemblies; for they themselves held one, he said, at *London* in the year 1653. so that the Synod of *Charenton* could not condemn them upon that account; but merely for refusing to acknowledg that an entire Dependence and Submission was owing to Synods.

As for the Synod of *Sainte-foy*, proceeded he, if all the business had been no more than illustrating and explaining their Articles, as Mr. Claude would have it, what need these have been inserted in the Confession of Faith? Could not this be done by an Act of a Synod without altering the Confession? It is sure their design was to express that Article concerning the Lord's Supper in such ambiguous terms as both sides had agreed upon, and each might interpret to his own advantage, which hath been an expedient often attempted, but to no purpose. Now this is in reality, not barely to explain and illustrate the Confession of Faith, and by that means settle a mutual Toleration, but down right to alter it. And now (added he) all that men have to do is but to consider with themselves what opinion they ought to entertain of a Confession of Faith, which a whole National Synod consented to alter. That the matter between Mr. Claude and him, was at last come to such a pass, that the truth must presently appear on one side or other. That the Principle asserted by Mr. Claude was a Principle of Pride and intolerable Presumption. For is not this the very extremity of Pride, that mere single private Persons should fan-

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cy themselves wiser and better able to understand the Scripture than a whole Ecclesiastical Assembly, a whole Council put together? And yet this was the unavoidable consequence of his opinion, which allowed private Persons a Priviledge and Freedom to examine the decisions of Councils. That an entire submission to the Church's judgment, and a full and implicite Obedience to that, was much more reasonable, and argued more of Christian Humility, than mens taking upon them to amend its Decisions.

It being now Mr. Claude's turn to speak, he told them, That their Discipline did indeed order such as refused submission, to be Excommunicated, after the last and final resolution had been given according to the Word of God in a National Synod Assembled: But it was no part of the Discipline's meaning, that this submission was due to the Authority of that Assembly abstractedly and as such; but, as he had before observed, to the Authority of Gods Word, according to which the Assemblies decision was to be formed, and this ever implies an Examination. The Excommunication therefore was just only upon supposal, that the Word of God had been followed, and never else. That the Excommunications pronounced by Councils had not really any thing of Justice or Efficacy, except when their determinations were founded on God's Word; and when they were not so, their sentences of Excommunication were unjust, and returned directly upon the head of those that thundered them out, according to St. Paul's Maxime, *If we, or an Angel from Heaven preach any other Gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.* That, if the Church of Rome pretended to no more than this, our dispute with her would be at an end; because then every man would still be privileged, nay, obliged to examine whether the Decisions be agreeable to God's Word or no; and consequently whether the Excommunications upon them be just or unjust. That it was with this temper of mind that the Synod of *Dort* had condemned, not the men whose Persons they never anathematiz'd at all, but their Errors, by demonstrating they were contrary to express Texts of Scripture. That for his own part, he lookt upon that as a very just Excommunication, but the reason why he did so, was, that he saw it was founded upon Scripture, and not upon the Authority of the Assembly themselves.

That it was true the Independents had once an extraordinary Assembly in the Year 1653. for the adjusting their Confession of Faith; but however they did commonly disavow the use of Colloquies and Synods; and for this very reason the Synod of *Charenton* condemned them, and not for refusing a blind and absolute Obedience to what the

Gal. 1. 2.

the Assemblies should decree in matters of Faith, as by the Act it self is abundantly evident.

For the Synod of *Sainte-Foy*, I cannot imagine (said he) why you will needs have it to intend an alteration in the Confession of Faith, I mean as to any essential part of it; for National Synods are not at all empowered to do this, and if that at *Sainte-Foy* had ever attempted it, all the Protestants in the Kingdom would have disclaimed the thing. I own they had power to put illustrations and explanations into an Act, and you must own too, that they had the same power to put them into the Confession; and when the same thing is capable of being done different ways, men are free to make choice of that which they esteem the most fitting and convenient. Here *M. de Condom* interrupting *Mr. Claude*, told him, it was certain that Synod had thoughts of couching the Article of the Lord's Supper in ambiguous expressions, and this was the design of the Mediators. That there was mentioned a power to decide all points of Doctrine, which had a manifest relation to the Real Presence, as held by the *Lutherans*. *Mr. Claude* replied, that to tax the Synod with a design of agreeing upon ambiguous expressions, was a mere conjecture of *M. de Condom*, for which he offered not the least proof; and that he for his part guessed the quite contrary; that he did not at all question but the Synod intended to do all that could be done for reducing the *Lutherans* to a full knowledge of the truth; and this was the meaning of that power given them to decide all Doctrinal Points with them, that is, to do it by the Word of God.

Then resuming the method of his Discourse, he made answer to what *M. de Condom* alledged, that it was intolerable Pride for mere single private Persons to fancy themselves wiser and better able to understand Scripture than a whole Ecclesiastical Assembly together. He told him then, that single and private Persons ought by no means to think so highly of themselves, as to fancy they were wiser and better able to understand Scripture than a whole Assembly together. That on the contrary, they should presume favourably of an Assembly, and retain a disposition to be taught by it. But still this was no Argument, that they should not continually have their Eyes open to discern whether an Assembly had really discharged their duty: imitating herein those *Peræans*, of whom it is said, that they compared what *St. Paul* Preached with the Scriptures, searching whether those things were so. That we must distinguish between a Judgment of *humility and charity*, which concludes but probably, and a perswasion of *Infallibility*, which concludes necessarily and certainly. That according to the Judgment of Charity and Humility, we must think the

the best of an Assembly, nay even of a private Doctor ; but in as much as both Assemblies, and private persons, are liable to mistakes, a man must not carry on this Judgment of Charity and Humility so far as that he should suffer himself to be blinded by it ; and when an Assembly or Doctor have really erred, not to see it ; for this would be to stretch things beyond their due bounds. For instance, said he, in the capacity I am in over my Flock, it is mens duty to presume favourably of me, that I understand the meaning of Scripture better than plain private Persons ; but for all that, they are by no means bound to think me infallible, nor fancy it impossible I should ever be mistaken in a point of Doctrine ; and in such a case a plain private Person is privileged to think he could understand the Scripture better than I. Private Doctors, says *M de Condrom*, are not at all concerned in our Dispute, all the World knows private Doctors may err, and consequently they can have no title to an absolute obedience. The Controversie is concerning the whole Body of an Ecclesiastical Assembly, and I expect from you a clear distinct answer to this particular ; whether you believe single private men can understand the meaning of Scripture better than the whole Body of the Church convened in a Council.

Mr. *Claude* replied, That he only mentioned private Doctors as an Argument that Christian Humility should not be abused, nor made a pretence for men to deny themselves the benefit of their own Eyes, that so they might avoid Pride and Presumption. For, if by *M. de Condrom*'s own Confession, private Doctors have no right to an absolute Obedience, it is neither a proud, nor presumptuous Imagination, that it may possibly happen, we should understand Scripture sometimes better than they ; tho' for the main we are bound to presume in favour of them, and that in probability it will be otherwise. The case is the same with Assemblies ; for even these, being not Infallible, ought not to challenge an absolute Submission, and such as God alone hath a just right to. That no less a Person than St. *Paul* hath declared, *That he had no Dominion over the Corinthians Faitb.*

2 Cor. 1.  
24.

*M. de Condrom* said, that quotation was impertinent, and desired to know of Mr. *Claude*, whether he was not of opinion, that an absolute obedience was due to St. *Paul*. The absolute obedience ( replied Mr. *Claude* ) which was due to St. *Paul*, was so to his Divine Doctrines, and not his person. No more, said *M de Condrom*, do we pretend, that men ought to pay this obedience to the persons of men whereof the Councils consist, but to the Holy Ghost, by which they are guided, according to that profession of the Council at *Jerusalem*, *It seemed good unto the Holy Ghost, and to us.* When the Holy Ghost appears in the determinations

Acts 15.

terminations of Councils, as he did in St. Paul's Doctrine, and that of the *Jerusalem Council*, then said Mr. *Claude*, this Obedience must be paid, never else. And this appearance of the Holy Ghost consisteth in the Councils decisions, being framed according to the Word of God. Still *M. de Condom* urged, that the dispute was not concerning the Word of God, but the true meaning of that Word. That distinction, says Mr. *Claude*, signifies nothing at all, because the true meaning of the Word of God, and the Word it self, are but one and the same thing.

Then *M. de Condom* returned to the business of the *Independents*, and urged, that according to Mr. *Claude*'s principle, there was no remedy for the avoiding *Independency*, nor any prevention, that there should not be as many different Religions as Parishes, nay, as many as there be single persons. That the *Independents* did not cast off Assemblies, so far as concerned instruction, only they did not allow them in any Authoritative decisions, and that in this the Pretended Reformed agreed with them. He beat upon this over and over again for a long time together, to all which Mr. *Claude* return'd the same answer he had done before, *viz.* That there was not indeed any humane means of Certainty and Infallibility, which could prevent the exorbitant errors of mens minds; but there was a certain and infallible Divine one, even the Holy Spirit of God, imparted to his True Believers; That Synods and other Assemblies, were means of mighty use, and very proper for this purpose, and the *Independents* condemnation was for rejecting these last, and not for refusing to Assemblies a full and Absolute Power of determining matters in Controversy. That although the *Protestants* did not allow such Assemblies a supreme and unbounded Authority, yet they did allow them as much, as the Ministers and Dispensers of God's Word are capable of.

At this rate, said *M. de Condom* then, we shall never have done disputing. I ask you therefore once more, *Sir*, whether you believe that single and private persons can understand the meaning of God's Word, better than the whole Church convened in Council? Mr. *Claude* told him, he had answered that Question already, to wit, that it does not usually fall out so; and that further, 'tis our duty to hope the best of an Ecclesiastical Assembly; but still it might come to pass, that through the prevalency of mens passions, and worldly Interests, the decisions of such Assemblies might be contrary to Truth. You must not run back thus to Interests and Passions, said *M. de Condom*, but answer my question in one word, by saying either Yes, or No. Mens Passions, and worldly Interests, said Mr. *Claude*, are premised here with a great

deal of Reason, because these are the main things that occasion erroneous determinations ; but since you are not willing to hear of them, my answer must be with this distinction, That God does not suffer it commonly so to be, but absolutely speaking, it is possible it should be so. *M. de Condom* said, that was as much as he desired, and that it was the most absurd thing in the World, to believe it so much as possible, for a single Man, and a private person, to understand the meaning of Scripture better than the whole Church met together in Council.

Mr. Claude replied, that he was amazed to hear *M. de Condom* cry out upon That as such a mighty absurdity, which resulted merely from the freedom used by God in dispensing his Grace. That supposing the Controversy to concern such means of knowledg as are purely humane, it would indeed be absurd to say, that a single and private person should be wiser than a whole Assembly, and that this would be then a principle of pride and presumption. But the matter now treat-

*Joh. 3. 8.* ed of is, the illumination of the Holy Spirit, which *bloweth where it listeth*, and God can give it to a private single person, and yet not give it to a whole Assembly. That of this there was an eminent instance

*Matt. 11. 25.* in our Saviours time, as he himself said, *I thank thee, O Father, Lord of Heaven and Earth, for that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes.* That the whole Jewish Church had in their Assemblies declared Jesus Christ a Deceiver. That nevertheless this was not only a Church, but the one sole Church in the World at that time, invested with the Authority of God, who had founded, nourisht, and brought it up till that time. That God had taught it by his Prophets, and deposited his Holy Oracles there. That this Church laid a just claim to a succession of Two thousand years continuance, and valued her self upon it. That she held formal solemn Assemblies, and such as Jesus Christ himself acknowledged. They

*Matt. 23. 2, 3.* sit, says he, in *Moses seat*, *All the before whatsoe'er they bid you observe, that observe and do.* And yet this very Church determin'd the greatest and most heinous Error that ever could be in the World, even that Jesus Christ was to be rejected as a wicked man and a Deceiver. That we cannot avoid affirming, that at that time single and private persons might understand the Scripture better than the whole Body of the Church met together; and that in allowing *M. de Condom's* Principle to be true, *viz.* That men ought to yield an absolute obedience to the decisions of Ecclesiastical Assemblies, without taking upon them a right to examine what is so decided; we do condemn Jesus Christ, and as many as then believed in him. For according to this principle, Jesus Christ

Christ ought not any more to have taught the people publickly, after the Church had past such decisions against him, nor ought the people to have given him their attention any more, because they were not suffered to examine those decisions. And yet, proceeded he, Jesus Christ did not forbear Preaching to the people, and converting many of them; nor did they withdraw their attention, notwithstanding all the decisions given against him. This principle then of a blind and implicit obedience, is consequently false, and contrary to the conduct of Jesus Christ and his Disciples.

To preclude this Argument, by urging that Jesus Christ wrought such miracles as did evidence his Authority to be Divine, is here of no signification at all. For there are two sorts of Miracles, the one true, the other false; the one, that *men may believe a lye*, the other to *convince them of the truth*. This distinction was made by God himself in the 13th Chapter of *Deuteronomy*, where he tells the *Israelites*, *That if a Prophet give them a sign or a wonder, and would perswade them to go after other Gods, They must not hearken unto him, for the Lord their God proveth them*. Jesus Christ also hath himself owned the truth of this distinction. Now, said he, if *M. de Condom's* principle had taken place, the people had nothing to do to make this distinction, after once the Church had determined that Jesus Christ wrought his Miracles by the help of *Beelzebub*, and not by the Power of God. They must not any more, according to *M. de Condom*, so much as open their eyes to see these Miracles, or suffer the least impression to be made upon themselves by them. And by consequence this principle is false, and destructive of the Christian Religion.

Hereupon *M. de Condom* interrupted *Mr. Claude*, telling him, that this Instance of the Jewish Church ought not to have been produced in the present case. For, said he, the Synagogue was to fall, thus the Prophets had foretold, and therefore the people ought not then to pay such an obedience to their Guides, as is now owing to the Church of Christ, which must never fail: To which *Mr. Claude* return'd, That seeing the Synagogue was to fall, it might consequently so fall out, that single and private persons should understand the meaning of Scripture better than the whole body of a Church met together in its solemn Assemblies, which was the very point in debate; and from hence it follows clearly, that it was neither pride, nor presumption, for private people, either to believe it possible for them at some time to understand Scripture better than the whole Body of an Assembly; nor upon this principle to take their decisions into examination. And that this was all he desired.

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Besides, said he, This Reason could have no manner of influence upon the *Jews*, because the Synagogue were not only not agreed upon it, but quite contrary, afflerting that it should never fail, they produced in their own behalf several promises, which, at first blush, seemed to have a great deal of strength. 'Tis but lost labour to urge in defence of this, the Prophets who foretold its fall; for the meaning of those Prophesies was the thing then in question, and the Synagogue having explained these in a sense that made for them, according to *M. de Condom's* principle, it was the people's duty to stick close to that explanation, without examining it at all. In a word ( said he ) this fall of the Synagogue, does not make their Assemblies differ at all from those of the Christian Church, with relation to the matter now in dispute between us. For what Promises soever the Church of Jesus Christ may have, that she shall subsist for ever, there is not any thing in Scripture gives us assurance, that the Assemblies of Councils shall never fail.

Here *M. de Condom* took up the Discourse, and said, That *Mr. Claude's* Argument concerning the time of the Synagogues fall, was the most impertinent thing in the World. For at that time it could not be said that there was any visible Authority upon Earth, to which men were necessarily obliged to submit; because Jesus Christ himself was there, that is, the very Truth appearing visibly among men, to whom God had given testimony from Heaven, and who wrought Miracles. Do but you, proceeded he, bring again Jesus Christ Teaching, Preaching, doing Miracles among us, and we shall have no further occasion for the Churches Authority. My Argument, said *Mr. Claude*, was not only the most pertinent to our present purpose, but the clearest and most concluding Argument in the World; and I hope you your self will grant it to be so, after I have entreated you to consider, that the visible Authority of the Son of God was the very point in dispute between the Synagogue and Jesus Christ, and that this very point the Synagogue had determined in the negative; That the main business was to know, whether Jesus Christ were a Deceiver or not, whether his Miracles proceeded from God or Beelzebub. That Jesus Christ's visible Authority could not decide that question in the peoples minds; for no Authority can decide a doubt till it be first received; and Jesus Christ's Authority was not as yet received, for the main controversy then depending, was, whether it should be received, or rejected: So that there remained only the Authority of the Church, and this had determined against him. According then to *M. de Condom's* Principles, private persons ought consequently to have stuck to that, and

and rejected Jesus Christ. M. de Condom called this Argument of Mr. Claude's a Jewish Argument. Mr. Claude returned, that this ought not to be called a Jewish Argument, because it concluded in favour of Christianity; but the contrary principle rather deserved this name, because it favoured the Cause and proceedings of the Jews.

Afterwards Mr. Claude said, That if he would have recourse to History, it will be no difficult matter to demonstrate, that many Councils have fallen into Error, and been mistaken in their Determinations. Particularly among others, the Council of Arimini, which condemned the Consubstantiality of the Son, that is, his Eternal Divinity. M. de Condom cried out, Whether are you carrying us now, Sir? To the Council of Arimini? When shall we have done, if all those Histories must be discut? Do not you know that the Council of Arimini was a forced, packt Assembly? You urge my very argument for me, said Mr. Claude, which is, that a General Council may be packt. Here is an instance of one, consisting of four hundred Bishops that was so. M. de Condom answered, That those Bishops were compelled by the Emperors Authority, who had sent Soldiers among them; but afterwards, when they were every one returned home, they disclaimed what had been done, and exprest their remorse for it. Mr. Claude replied, That many of them, it was true, did acknowledg they had done amiss; but that very acknowledgment of, and repentance for a Fault, which M. de Condom affirms they shewed, is a Confirmation of their committing it; and 'tis of no great moment to know, upon what motives they committed it, since it is plain, that it was really committed. And further, every particular man's returning from his Error, is a plain Indication, that each of them thought himself under no Obligation of acquiescing in what had been determined, when they were all met together in Council.

M. de Condom cried out, That there was no necessity of meddling with all these Historical Points, and that it would divert them too much from the main businels. There is, says he, an easier way of deciding the matter. The Subject of our Controversy, is the first Principle of Faith in particular Persons. This in your Opinion is the Holy Scripture; in ours, the Churches Authority. Put the case in a young Child, who hath been baptized, but hath not yet read the Scripture; I would know by what Principle this Child believes the Scripture to be Divine; particularly the Book of Canticles for instance, which hath not a word of God in it. Now this Child who is a Christian, who hath

hath received the Holy Ghost, and Faith conveyed into him by Baptism, and who is a member of the Church, does either doubt of the Scriptures Divine Authority, or he does not; If he does not doubt, then he believes it Divine upon the Churches Authority, which is the first Authority he lives under. If he does doubt, then a man may be a Christian, and yet doubt whether the Scripture be true.

Mr. Claude returned, That he could say something to that supposal of *M. de Condom*, That every baptized Child receives the Holy Ghost; but was unwilling to stay upon a thing by the by, or deviate from the main matter in dispute. He would therefore satisfie himself, with making a few Reflections upon what *M. de Condom* urged last. The first said he, is, That the first knowledg of the Catholick Church given by the Holy Spirit to this Child, is in all probability given by his Creed, where he finds *I believe the Holy Catholick Church*. And yet in the Creed, that Article is placed after several other Articles of Doctrine. For it begins with *God the Father Almighty*, goes on with the *Son Jesus Christ*, and the *Holy Ghost*, and after these comes in the *Catholick Church*. Now this is a manifest proof, that the belief of Doctrines is not wholly derived from the Churches Authority, for else the Creed ought to be put together after another method, and the first thing said, should be, *I believe the Catholick Church, and by the Catholick Church, I believe in God the Father, and so on.*

My second Reflection, said he, is, That you ought not to take it for granted, as you do, that the first Authority a Child begins to live under, is that of the Catholick Church. It being manifest, That the first Authority a Child lives under, is his Father or Mother, or if you please his Nurses; and that the Churches cannot take place till afterwards, but does in some measure depend upon the other. The Consequence whereof is, That the first Authority, which is the Paternal, can as well lead the Child to Scripture, as it can to the Church.

Then, Thirdly, said he, It is the easiest thing in the World to revert your own Argument back upon your self, thus; The baptized Child either doubts of the Churches Authority, or he does not; if he does not, then he believes it upon the Authority of Scripture, for there is no other way for him to believe it with a Divine Faith: And consequently, it is not the Church that induces men to believe Scripture, but Scripture that induces the belief of the Church, which is the

the thing we contend for. If he does doubt, then there is a Christian that hath received the Holy Spirit, and Faith conveyed to him by Baptism, and is a Member of the Church, and yet is in a state of doubt which is that first Authority whereupon all the rest of his Faith depends. Now that the Child cannot with a Divine Faith believe the Churches Authority any other way, but by the Authority of Scripture, I prove thus. If it be not by Scripture that he believes the Church and its Authority; then 'tis either by way of immediate Inspiration, and Enthusiasm, or by his Fathers, or Mothers, or Nurses Authority, or by Argument taken from the very nature of the Church. This could not be by Enthusiasm, because the Holy Ghost does not proceed in such a method. Nor by his Fathers, or Mothers, or Nurses Authority, for you discern the inconveniences of advancing such kinds of Authority for the first Principle of Faith. Nor can it be by proper Proofs and Arguments taken from the nature of the Church; because as you in your Argument suppose the Child not yet to have read the Scripture; so do I likewise in mine, suppose him not to have considered the nature of the Catholick Church, and to know no more of it, than barely the Name. It remains therefore, that the Child either believes the Catholick Church by the Scripture, which you will not grant; or that he does not believe it at all, but doubts of it; and so you fall into the same inconvenience as to the Church, which you labour to reduce me to, with relation to Scripture.

It may be said very truly, That upon this Pinch a man might discern *M. de Condom's* Wit was not in the condition it used to be, and that his natural freedom of Argument and Repartee, plainly flagg'd. He put himself upon maintaining that the first Authority the Child lived under, was that of the Church, and not his Fathers or Mothers. *Mr. Claude* returned, That this was a thing too evident to be denied, that the Fathers and Mothers, and those who take the first pains about educating the Child, is the first Authority with respect to Religion, and that he must at first of all learn from them, that there is such a thing as a Catholick Church, into which he must enter himself, or such a thing as the Scripture, which was from God, and to which he must yield Obedience. That being upon enquiry by what mean the Child can come to believe the Catholick Churches Authority, there is a necessity for fixing, either upon Inspiration, or the Paternal Authority, or the Scriptures, which informed him concerning it. *M. de Condom* answered, That the Childs Faith in the Churches Authority

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was a Divine Faith, because it was the Holy Ghost that wrought it in him. Mr. *Claude* replied, That the question was not now concerning the efficient Cause, which produced this Faith in the Child, but concerning the Motive or Argument, by which it was produced. If *M. de Condom*'s meaning were, that the Holy Ghost wrought Faith in this Child, without any Argument or Motive at all, this were a sort of Enthusiasm, and the Holy Ghost does not Influence People at that rate. *M. de Condom* said, there were indeed Motives of Credibility. Mr. *Claude* returned hereupon, That if he would allow the Child so much time, as to examine those Motives of Credibility for the Authority of the Church, and perceive their strength, He himself would in like manner allow the same Child time to examine the Motives of Credibility for the Authority of Scripture, and perceive the strength of them; but in this case he must forego his Argument, which proceeds upon a Supposition, that the Child never yet read the Scripture.

But, is not this true, said *M. de Condom*, That in these circumstances the Child either does or does not doubt of the Scriptures being Divine? And is it not as true, said Mr. *Claude*, That in these Circumstances, the Child either does, or does not doubt of the Churches Authority? For if you take the Child before he have read the Scripture, I will look upon him too, before he knows what Motives of Credibility there are for the Churches Authority. It is your part to answer my Argument, and the very same answer you give, will serve me against yours. But do you, as you think fit, I however will not scruple to give a direct answer to your way of reasoning. The Child then may be looke upon with Distinction, as to three several times; either, before his Father have ever shewed him the Bible, and informed him that this Book came from God, or after his Father have told him thus much, but before he himself have read it; or lastly, after that he hath read the Book himself. As to the first of these times, which is that your Argument looks upon him in, it cannot well be said, that then he either does or does not doubt, for neither the one, nor the other is strictly true, according to your meaning. Not to doubt of any thing, signifies to be well assured of it. Now, before a man can be said, to doubt, or to be well assured that any thing is so, or so; he must first have some knowledg of the thing it self. I can neither doubt nor be assured, that such a Person is King of *Spain*, unless I first have some knowledg of the Person. So that your reasoning is by no means

means good, that a Child either does, or does not doubt of the Scripture's being Divine: For there is a medium between these two, to wit, such as consists in a state called, *An Ignorance of pure negation*. He knows not as yet what the Scripture is, nor hath ever heard talk of it. To doubt, or not doubt whether Scripture be Divine, a Man must have some knowledg, and form some Idea of the thing: But the Child can never form any Idea of a Book he never heard once mentioned. At the second point of time, when his Father hath shewed him the *Bible*, and told him, that Book is the Word of God, but the Child hath not yet read it himself; he believes it to be the Word of God, but this he does, not by a Divine, but humane Faith, because his Father hath told him so: And this is the case of a *Catechumen*. At the third point of time, when he is supposed to have read the Book himself, and felt the virtue and efficacy of it, he believes it to be God's Word, but this he does not now by a humane Faith, because his Father told him so, but by a Divine Faith, because he hath found the Divinity and Efficacy of it upon himself; and this is the condition of a Believer.

*M. de Condom* laid hold of the word *Catechumen*, and said, that this was a Christian, one already Baptized, and actually admitted into Covenant with God. Mr. *Claude* answered, that by the word *Catechumen* he meant nothing else but a Child after Baptism, at the time of his being instructed in the first Rudiments of Religion. *M. de Condom* beat again upon almost the same things that had been said before, constantly affirming it to be the Churches Authority, that the Child received the Scriptures as Divine; and that having received them as such from the Church, he did afterwards receive the meaning and interpretation of them from thence also.

Pray, *Sir*, tell me, said Mr. *Claude* then, when a Child learns at first of all, that there is a Catholick Church, Is it barely a general Idea, which consists in knowing only that there is such a thing as a Catholick Church, without knowing where, or which it is? or does it determine him to that Church whose publick Assemblies he sees? For if it be the former of these, this, as you would make it, is a mighty wild and insignificant principle of Faith. I know that there is a Catholick Church to whose Authority it is my duty to submit, but I cannot tell where that Church is, nor which is she; this would be but an odd principle of Faith. The Child, said *M. de Condom*, does certainly determine this Idea to the particular Church, whose Assemblies he sees, and in which he himself bears a part, and does believe that to be the Catholick Church, and not barely that there is such a Church. Let us imagine then, said Mr. *Claude*, a Child born within a Church that

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is Heretical, or Schismatical, the *Athiopian* Church suppose, the first principle of Faith in this Child will be from the *Athiopian* Church, looking upon that as the Catholick. From this Church then, and from her Authority, according to your Tenet, he will receive the Scripture as Divine; from her likewise he will receive the meaning and interpretation of Scripture; and he must never afterwards believe himself priviledged to examine the determinations of his *Athiopian* Church, for fear of falling into the inconvenience and absurdity of fancying it impossible for him, a private single person, to understand the true meaning of Scripture better than the whole body of the Church. Tell me now, *Sir*, whether according to this principle, this Child be not obliged always to abide within that Heretical, or Schismatical Church? Tell me what means you will contrive for him to get out of it? It is evident then, that your principle would serve as well to continue a Jew in his Judaism, a Pagan in his Heathenism, and a Heretick in his Heresy, as an Orthodox Christian in the true Church.

To this *M. de Condom* replied, that in the persuasion of that *Athiopian* Child, we must make a difference between that part which proceeded from the Holy Spirit, and that which is the effect of prejudice and humane prepossession. That the Holy Spirit's dictate was in general, that there was a Catholick Church somewhere or other; but his supposal, that the Church in which he was born was that Catholick Church, proceeded from humane prepossession. It is true, he did from this Church receive the Scriptures, and believed them to be Divine, for no other reason but upon its Authority: But afterwards, as he was reading the Scriptures, the Holy Ghost raised in him some scruples about the Church he was born in, and by this means he came off from the Heresy and Schism he found himself insnared in.

*Mr. Claude* returned, that *M. de Condom* must of necessity either retract his principle, or confess what he now alledged to be utterly impossible. Because this *Athiopian* neither can, nor must be allowed to understand the Scriptures any otherwise than in the sense and interpretation of his own Church, by whose Authority it is that he believes them to be Divine, and from whose hands he receives their meaning; so that when he reads Scripture, there can never start up any scruples in his mind against the truth of his own Church, because he never expounds any Text of Scripture, but in agreement with the sense of that Church about it. Now if on the other side your meaning be, that "this person expounds Scripture of his own head, and according to his own judgment, so taking it in a sense different from that of the Church, you at the same time make him forego the principle that you have all this while been

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contending for; and it is not you only that make him forego it, but you do besides maintain, that the Holy Ghost himself makes him forego it, and all those mighty inconveniences you exclaimed against, vanish into nothing. He added moreover, that what *M. de Condom* said last, justified the measures the Protestants had taken in relation to the Church of *Rome*; for altho that had been believed to be the Catholick Church in the time of our Infancy, tho we had received the Scriptures from her, and believed them to be of Divine Authority; yet must we not be blamed for making a difference between that part of this belief which proceeded from the Holy Ghost, and that which was the effect of humane Prepossession and Prejudice: We cannot be found fault with, for having admitted some Scruples against the Truth of this Church, as we read the Scriptures, and for having upon this account withdrawn our selves from her Communion.

*M. de Condom* said, the Cases did still differ in this circumstance, That the *Ethiopian*, when he left his own, would betake himself to the Catholick Church, whereas the Pretended Reformed have not put themselves into any other Communion at all. You courted indeed *Jeremy* the Patriarch of *Constantinople*, but he would have nothing to do with you. The separation was not from our selves, said *Mr. Claude*, and that is enough to shew that we have not separated from the true Church. If *Jeremy* the Patriarch of *Constantinople* would have nothing to do with us, as you say, that was to his own loss, and he did not do as he should have done in it.

Upon this the Company rose, and the Conference which lasted some time longer, grew a great deal more confused; several things were then spoken of. *M. de Condom* exaggerated much, and pretended to draw a parallel between the separation of the *Protestants* and that of the old Hereticks, particularly the *Arrians* and *Macedonians*, that set up new Churches by themselves. *Mr. Claude* compared the *Protestants* behaviour, to that of Christ's Apostles, when they separated from the *Jews*; that, as the Apostles relied on Scripture against the *Jews*, who relied upon Ecclesiastical Assemblies and their Authority, the *Protestants* did the same against the Church of *Rome*. He said, the *Arrians* maintained, that the Consubstantiality of the Son of God determined by the *Nicene Council*, was a Novel Doctrine, and that many other persons had in truth exprest themselves very unadvisedly concerning the Divinity of the Son; among others he instanced in *Origen*, *Justin Martyr*, and the *Council of Antioch*. As for *Origen*, *M. de Condom* said he was a suspected Author, and the *Council of Antioch* said he was an *Arrian Council*; to which *Mr. Claude* replied,

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that he was much mistaken ; for that Council was held before *Arrianus* his time, and yet rejected the Term *Consubstantial*. As to *Justin Martyr*, How, Sir, said he, a Martyr speak amis of the Divinity of the Son of God ! I will never believe a word on't. You may believe what you think fit, Sir, said Mr. *Claude* ; but for all that, the thing is even so.

Afterwards *M. de Condom* put himself upon the Invocation of Saints, and Prayers for the Dead : For the first of these, he told them Mr. *Daille* had allowed it to be Thirteen hundred years old ; and Mr. *Blondell* acknowledged the second to be of great Antiquity. Mr. *Claude* replied, It was no great wonder, if the Church of *Rome*, which had collected, and Canonized the Errors and Superstitions of former Ages, had picked up some that were of a good old standing. But he ought to have said withal, that Mr. *Daille* had made it appear, that for Three hundred years together there was not to be found the least footsteps of Invocation of Saints, and especially, that there was not any manner of ground for it in Scripture. That he acknowledged Prayer for the Dead to be one of the oldest superstitions ; but there was a mighty difference between the practice of the Primitive Christians, and the modern devotions of the *Romish* Church. And after all, it was an Error contrary to the principles of Scripture.

Exod. 23.

*M. de Condom* betook himself again to the Comparison between the *Protestants* and Hereticks of old ; inferring from thence, that they and their Church was new and upstart. Mr. *Claude* shewed him, that this prejudice was extremely unjust, and of very pernicious consequence. Unjust, because on one hand it placed the advantage on the strongest side, and those that have most of their party ; whereas the Scripture teaches us quite contrary. That we must not follow a multitude to do evil : For the strongest side are continually taxing others with making a new Body, and a new Church. Unjust, secondly, because a false Antiquity may be mistaken for a true, an Antiquity of some Ages standing, which is really no better than a Novelty, for an Antiquity of all Ages of the Church ; which in the business of Religion, is the highest injustice imaginable. He added moreover, that this prejudice was of very pernicious consequence ; because at this rate, when once Errors and Superstitions had by insensible degrees crept into Religion, and Custom, or the Schools had given them countenance, there would no possible means be left of exposing or extirpating them : For the maintainers of them will be continually objecting against those that endeavour it, that they set up a new Church, and a new Religion. Thus it was, that the *Pharisees* accused Jesus Christ for an Innovator, upon pretence

Matt. 15.

pretence that his Disciples kept not the Traditions of the Elders, which were indeed but Innovations themselves. Thus the *Jews* taxed St. Paul for a *Mover of Sedition among them through the whole world, and being a Ringleader of the Sect of the Nazarenes*, which they lookt upon as a new Sect. Thus all the Apostles were charged by the Heathens, for being disturbers of the publick peace, and bringers up of New things, because they endeavoured to root out the old Errors out of mens hearts, and bring them to the worship of the one only true God, maker of Heaven and Earth.

Acts 21.

*M. de Condom* replied, That Jesus Christ was not new, that the *Jews* expected the *Messias*; that *John Baptist, Anna the Prophetess, Simeon, and the wise men* had owned him. True, said Mr. *Claude*, he was not really new, for *he is the same yesterday, to day, and for ever*: But he was new to that whole Nation which expected a temporal *Messiah*, and did not see in him any sign of what they expected. He was new in their opinion, in that he condemned the old Traditions. His Church was new to them, because it separated from the Body of the *Jews*, and made a distinct body which they had never seen before. And as for *John Baptist, Anna the Prophetess, Simeon, and the wise men*, what were these single private persons, if compared to the whole body of Priests, Pharisees and Lawyers, and the whole Body of all the *Jews* in general, which never owned him, but lookt for an earthly *Messias*. It is plain then, that this prejudice of Novelty, forbidding men to examine things to the bottom, and not distinguishing between a true and a counterfeit Antiquity, accounting that old which was practised yesterday, and every thing new that is contrary to what was in vogue yesterday, is a very ill and dangerous prejudice. It fortifies *Jews* and Heathens against the Christian Religion, and indeed, was continually made use of by *Celsus*, and the rest of them that opposed Christianity.

Heb. 18.3.

I own, said *M. de Condom*, that the Heathens did upbraid the Christians with their Novelty, but the Christians demonstrated to them, that the *Jews* always believed in the same God they worshipped, and did expect the same *Messias* they profest. What you say, answer'd Mr. *Claude*, is a further confirmation of my opinion, to wit, that you ought not out of prejudice conclude for what appears to be new, but search things throughly, to know certainly whether what appears to be new, be so in truth. The Heathens accusation proceeded from your prejudice, and the Christians defence of themselves is according to my principle. For it was by an exact examination of things, that the Christians demonstrated they were not new, tho the World looked upon them so, and that what they opposed in the Heathen superstitions, was really new, tho taken to be old.

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The Conference having lasted a very great while, near upon five hours, and being carried on with abundance of earnestness in the disputants on both sides, and of attention from the ~~landers~~ by, the Company now began to interpose, and so the dispute broke off. After which Mr. Claude applied himself to *M. de Condom*, with a great deal of civility and respect, and intreated him, that the difference between their Religions and Opinions, might not incline him to think less kindly of him. That he for his part should ever retain a very high value and esteem for so deserving a person. *M. de Condom* returned him this very obliging anwer, That he had some knowledg of him before by his Writings, but was exceeding glad to know his person now by this Conference, in the management whereof, he had done all that could possibly be done for the vindication of his Cause; and that whenever any opportunity of serving him offered it self, he would very willingly and heartily lay hold on it.

Presently after *M. de Condom* went away; and Mr. Claude having first returned thanks to the Company, particularly to the Lady *Marechale's de Lorge*, for their patience and attention, took his leave of *Mademoiselle de Duras* in words to this purpose, 'hat he had vindicated the Truth before her; and all that was now left for him to do, was only to beseech Almighty God in her behalf; and to exhort her, that she would improve what she had now heard, to the settling her more firmly in that Religion which God had called her to, and not suffer her self to be shaken by any temptation. And these things he would not fail to request of God for her. *Mademoiselle de Duras* thank'd him very kindly for the trouble he had been at, and very passionately begged his Prayers: Which Mr. Claude having promised, presently withdrew.

### E R R A T C A

**I**N the Preface, Pag. xi. for *Palmenio*, read *Palmerio*; p. xxii. l. 1. *is mere*, r. *wave*. In the Anwer, p. 2. l. 3. f. *your*, r. *our*; p. 7. in the Marg. r. *Epheb.* l. 22. 23. p. 8. l. 18. *froze*, r. *goes*; p. 10. l. 14. f. *Good*, r. *Goods*; p. 23. l. 17. *sin*, r. *on*; p. 24. l. 10. after *for*, r. *is*; p. 31. l. 25. f. *knows*, r. *follows*; p. 32. l. 1. f. *ax*, r. *is*; p. 35. l. 13. *dele That*; p. 42. l. 2. after *for*, r. *is*; *ibid.* l. 3. for *this*, r. *his*; p. 60. l. 20. *dele If*; p. 67. l. 1. f. *frequent*, r. *freely*.

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